

Fishin' 'Long Old Ellum Creek

—AND OTHER POEMS—

BY

NELSE J. SCURLOCK



COLLECTED AND EDITED BY

CHAS. N. WOOD

Faint, illegible text or bleed-through from the reverse side of the page, appearing as mirrored characters and lines.

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Respectfully,

N. J. Scurlock.

A POET'S ROSARY.

TO THE MEMORY OF NELSE J. SCURLOCK.

BY A. J. EIDSON, M. D.

I count my Rosary of Years,
A Cross with ev'ry bead;
Between my haunting, nameless fears
And sore heart's craving need,
I gaze up through my useless tears,
And still unanswered plead!
At Life's strange Shrine I weary kneel,
Though prayers seem in vain;
Yet, in my anxious soul I feel
The Powers which sustain
My being, will at last reveal
A cure for all my pain!
So, at Misfortune's threats I smile,
And hopeful go my way,
Pleased with some token for the while
That cheers a dreary day;
As new and shifting scenes beguile
A fretful child at play!

Fort Madison, Iowa.

Biographical Sketch.

NELSON JOSHUA SCURLOCK was born near Glenwood, Schuyler Co., Mo., February 14, 1859. His early life was spent upon his father's farm, where, surrounded by quiet scenes, he gained the deep knowledge of books and formed the intimate acquaintance with Nature so indispensable to poetry.

In the public school he was always a leader in his classes and many stories are told of how he was able to learn his lessons with such rapidity and ease as to be ready to help others long before the recitation. His mind was also exceedingly retentive, so that not only the common branches were thoroughly mastered, but Ancient History, Mythology, Philosophy and the Sciences were compelled to yield their treasures to the "Rustic Genius."

His first literary attempts appeared in the 'paper' at the neighborhood lyceum or 'literary.' It was enough to show the young eagle his wings. He soon took the place of country correspondent for the County papers. It was but a short step to the work of regular contributor, first under the nom-de-plume of Paul T. Godfrey and later the less euphonious Peleg Scaggs.

His work soon fell under the eye of Mr. T. E. Sublette of the Kirksville Graphic who employed him as paragrapher and poet for many years. Pleasing mirth, and healthy humor blend with sadness and melancholy in his writings, both prose and poetic. His style is characterized by smooth flowing and ornate diction, well chosen words, apt figures of speech, and always a graceful climax or conclusion. His last poem, "Haw Creek Philosophy" was published but a few weeks before his unfortunate death. It was preceded a short time by "Living and Dead," one of the

sweetest songs ever sung. These were both printed in the Glenwood Phonograph, a paper founded by Mr. Scurlock in 1894 and ably edited by him for more than a year.

In religion Mr Scurlock occupied an independent position, recognizing merit wherever found; he sincerely respected all religious people and readily contributed his part toward the support of the gospel in his own neighborhood. When the pious people of his vicinity needed a house of worship he was ready to help and gave the house its appropriate name—Valley View.

Let the work of his own hand as recorded in this book be his best biography. If he needs any defense, let them speak. The discerning reader will understand him and feel that his untimely demise is nothing short of calamitous. Judge him not harshly. Let him plead his own cause. He is our brother.



IN MEMORY OF

Helse J. Scurlock.

FEBRUARY 14, 1859.—NOVEMBER 14, 1902.

Harp, that oft soothed the sad singer's soul,—
Mute now in hope's afterglow,—
Never again shall thy sweet chords thrill,
Cunningly voicing the singer's will,
Ceased are thy melodies, silent thy strings—
The singer's head lies low.

Hills, brown and bare under Boreal blight,
Ye knew him well, ye well know
How light a step hath a care-weary heart;
How sadly dwelleth a soul apart;
Oft on your mantle his hot tears fell,
Fold ye him tenderly—so.

Trees, growing gray by his own fair lane,
Ye, in the dear long ago,
Heard the glad laugh of a rare, bonny lad,
Did his bright glance make your ancient hearts glad?
Blithely he sang, but ah, never again
Shall the sweet melody flow.

Lone mother-heart, by a lonely hearth,
With her sad loss bowed low,
Dreams of a baby face—patter of feet—
Shy sturdy youth after knowledge most fleet;
Dreams—but the dreamer's fair visions have fled—
He lies out there 'neath the snow.

Sadly we mourn for the early dead—
Midnight for mid-noon's bright glow—
Flowers o'er thy couch may the gentle Spring strew;
Grace mayst thou find who oft bitterness knew;
Wrapped in thy grave may thy faults ever rest—
Rest where thy head lies low.

CHAS. N. WOOD.



For old days tonight I'm wishin' --
Not for sake of hook and line—
Not to sprout a new ambition—
Not to claim a proud position—
But again to call 'em mine!

—Fishin' Days, p. 75.

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FOREWORD.

UPON receipt of the news of Mr. Scurlock's untimely death, came the thought, "What will become of his work, now that he is gone?" As soon as propriety would allow we requested copies of all poems in possession of the family for our scrap-book. We were later led to undertake the editorial work upon this book. Our long acquaintance with the poet's literary work was of great value to us as we found many of the printed copies quite imperfect. Some words and even lines had to be supplied to restore the writer's evident thought. We have changed a few titles for obvious reasons. Wherever this was done the original title will be found in parenthesis in the index. A few greatly regretted errors may be found, but on the whole we feel sure the book will answer its purpose admirably.

Our thanks are due the local press for their numerous courtesies and to many friends for assistance and encouragement. May you all feel repaid by possessing this volume is the wish of

THE EDITOR.

To that one best friend
who saw with pride
the first tokens of his surpassing genius;
who ever cheered his darkest hours;
never failed him in any
earthly emergency;
and who mourns with unspeakable
grief his untimely departure,
the poet's mother,
this volume is dedicated.

RUSTIC GENIUS.

Inscribed to Cyrus Young.

Do you remember, Cyrus, that chill eve—
'Twas near the close of autumn, I believe—
In Glenwood first you met a rustic youth—
Untrained in science—little praised for truth—
Quite callow in appearance—and in air
Grotesquely striking to inquiring stare—
In speech unpolished—and in manner shy—
In nose prodigious—but in brow not high—
In short, whose form and general aspect might
To some prove Darwin's evolution right?

That evening was a darkly fately time;
With vice 'twas pregnant, Cyrus, if not crime.
Alas, alas! if man could only know
What crop depends on seed that he may sow—
If prescience only told him if his cares
Were for a field of grain or waste of tares!
Events which pass upon a moment's wing
May save a nation or depose a king;
Mere trifles seeming at the very time,
But soon historic facts of man or clime:
A parting breath—the phrase of yes or no—
May bring to countless thousands weal or woe.
So say the voice of truth and look of time—
One instance only shall augment my rhyme;
Pray look with me to Eden, where began
All human suffering in the "fall of Man."
Had our first parents stood by gospel right,
Kicked Satan, and declined to take a bite,
Their children ne'er had known terrestrial taints,
Nor lived bad hypocrites to die good saints.
Ah, yes, apparent trifles soon or late,
Like growing icebergs, may have wondrous weight.

Say, Cyrus, can your memory recall
The honied words your tongue that eve let fall,
While stood that callow youth, with eager ear,
Scarce breathing—'twas such ecstasy to hear?

If possible, no doubt you would forget,
For such remembrance only brings regret;
But all consistent with the will of fate,
E'en memory is an ill of mortal state;
Response would be—if one should question why—
Dark recollections live, while bright ones die.
Youth's kindlier deeds in manhood we forget,
Its wayward traits live in our musings yet;
We think not how we gave our cakes and pies,
But well can mention those we gave black eyes;
A mother's kiss is lost in time's swift tide,
But who forgets the switch his father plied?
Permit me, then, to sorrow as a friend,
For what you must deplore, but cannot mend.

You told that youth, with most impressive air,
'Twas his to stand on Fame's high, giddy stair,
Deride opinion, laugh at custom's law,
Make rivals weep, and fill his friends with awe.
You called his mind a wondrous mass of light,
That would astound the nation, if he'd write—
Write items, verses, aught of news or note—
Describe Brown's work-bench, sing of Johnson's coat—
Be mostly serious, but to cause a laugh,
With all the wheat mix in a little chaff—
Write at some length—quite half a column fill
To tell what Jackson said he heard at mill—
When parties went in quest of fish or duck,
A column send, and close it— "Usual luck"—
Ignore propriety, seek "lucky hits,"
And rank with clever fools, if not with wits.

Yes, such advice you gave—and such he took;
For its effect o'er all the country look.
There is great rivalry in nature—hark!
Just then I heard a neighbor's greyhound bark,
And barking even now my own dog is,
No doubt to prove a better voice is his.
Shall vulgar dogs have longing to excel,
And god-like man not feel the thirst as well?
Shall race-horse talent slumber in its place,
While jackass dullness wins the glorious race?
No! pride and envy softly steal along,
And raise contestants in a motley throng.

In "items" first that youth was pleased to shine,
And country folks declared them very fine;
A wretched falsehood or uncivil jest,
Applied to one, was fun for all the rest—
'Twas just such fun as idle striplings know,
When hornets rush upon a nearer foe,
And closed as theirs, when vanquished valor brings
Full in their midst the keen pursuing stings;
When came their time to take the other's place,
They vowed it was an outrage and disgrace.
Oh selfish people! you judge ever thus—
" 'Tis good for others, but too bad for us!"
Still clinging to the folly of his ways,
Aspiringly that youth wrote on for praise;
He spread some jokes before the public eye
That slept in almanacs of years gone by,
And quoted from departed sons of fame,
Till wonder doubted whence his wisdom came.

The meanest kind of doggerel next he tried,
To prove that genius is but mind applied;
His fameward way he forced, through mire and fog,
With various verse—a sonnet on a hog—
Lines on a drouth—a lyric strain on debt—
Perchance he owes for paper used thus yet.
Didactic stanza, elegy, and ode,
All in his giddy mind could claim abode;
Most beauteous fancies in their home, no doubt,
But wretched and misshapen things went out.

The jay may mark the eagle in the sky,
And strive as hard, but cannot fly so high,
Yet he may think the better flight his own,
Because his plumage is the plainer shown;
So may the dolt read poems most sublime,
And, stung by emulation, turn to rhyme;
By "midnight tapers" labor long and hard,
And prove himself a blockhead, not a bard,
Yet when his lay is finished, feel quite vain,
And deem it better, since it *is* more plain.

Such weakness had my rustic youth—he thought
The nation praised and wondered while he wrought;
His lyrics, elegies—no matter what—
He told himself would never be forgot;

When Shakespeare's page and Byron's burning line
No more were read, his genius still would shine.
He fancied when he walked the village street,
He was admired by all he chanced to meet,
And thought rapt strangers gazing on his brow,
Divined his mission—what he did, and how—
And to his mind the question often came,
What maidens sighed at mention of his name.
Still poured he nothings from his o'ertaxed skull,
By wise folks pitied, envied by the dull,
Till waking from delirious dreams of fame;
He knew his folly, half divorced his shame;
For while Parnassus mocked his aching sight,
He ceased to print, and almost ceased to write.
Too late, too late, thus ceased he to aspire;
The spark was dropped—the prairie is on fire!

A pilgrim by two different routes to fame,
Of course the country soon had learned his name—
That name to which the lustre did belong
Of rural items and of doggerel song!
Renown so sudden, envy swore to share—
Yes, it would try, though effort brought despair.
Bright childhood brushed away its transient tears,
And strove for laurels with decrepit years;
The urchin ceased to call for food and drink,
And loudly called for paper, pen and ink;
The grandsire wiped his glasses, hid his cane,
And, at the desk, disowned rheumatic pain;
The housewife itemized—and burnt the bread,
The husband scrawled—nor thought of stock unfed.
Ere long the mania had so general grown,
Each neighborhood a busy scribe could own;
Bards, itemizers, if could point to both,
The former, though, were of the later growth.

Who followed first that youth? what star of fame
Next rose to gild a long-neglected name?
'Twas "Slicer"—austral planet big and bright,
Which o'er South Prairie shed its genial light.
Ah, yes, 'twas Alexander—though not he
Who rode Bucephalus—ruled land and sea—
And wept for monarchs and their hosts unknown,
To meet his legions and be overthrown—

Not he who ne'er victorious foeman knew—
Yet one who seems a conquering genius too—
He, known as A. G. by his fellow men,
Who conquered patience with his facile pen,
And crossed a half a hundred T's at least,
In one description of a farmer's feast.
Yes, "Slicer" was a trifle too prolix,
And made twelve letters do the task of six;
Yet mingled judgment with the scribbling vice,
And with instruction seasoned every "slice."
'Tis pity those who have arisen since
As much of common sense do not evince.

Who next appeared?—Green Valley's hopeful son—
A youth whom every talent seemed to shun;
Who raved of "Lost Creek," till folks were inclined
To think the creek less lost than his poor mind.
He and the Elm Creek correspondent thought
Each other rivals—through the paper fought—
They slanged and criticized, yet, strange but true,
The world rolled on as it is wont to do.
Poor young Gamaliel! though he longed for praise,
Few were his sunny itemizing days;
Back to obscurity soon did he sink—
'Twas well; more words were but a waste of ink.

Who next came on the correspondent's stage?
Ah, pins and ribbons now the eye engage!
'Twas she who wrote the earlier "Jimtown" news
In paragraphs quite pleasant to peruse;
No malice—no false wit misled her pen—
When once she wrote, we hoped she'd write again;
Fresh laurels still are turning for her brow;
As "O. B. H." North Schuyler knows her now.

Who next the showy writing gown to don?
Why, sure as fate, it was good "Stumpy John,"
The clever fellow whose infectious smile
Is like a halo seen full half a mile;
The butterfly which scorned to seem a midge,
And hovers o'er the fields of "Gospel Ridge."
His talent never pines in waning phrase,
And he is only mentioned here for praise;
Some faults are his perhaps—but from the rest
He now is summoned and proclaimed the best.

His pseudonym is rather unrefined,
And out of keeping with his gifted mind:
"Haw Eater!" readers cease to give applause,
While wondering if he must subsist on haws!
Good "Stumpy John," still lend to public sight
Facetious incidents and fancies bright;
Anon refer to troubles caused of yore
By vagrant cats about a neighbor's door;
Write on—write on—but change your pseudonym—
Hold high the lamp whose light is never dim!

Who next? 'twas "Spartacus"—a noted name
Long, long before men itemized for fame;
Yes, "Spartacus" with "Junior" neat affixed,
Perchance to hint of talents intermixed,
And intimate to wondering fellow men
A duplex skill in use of sword and pen.
Of what he wrote it is enough to say
By few, or none, 'twas cast unread away;
It bore the stamp of common sense and taste,
By grammar polished and good judgment graced.
He lies with "Slicer" in oblivion's shroud,
His name unheard amid the busy crowd.

These have I singled from the various throng,
To aid my theme and emphasize my song;
Some merit is conceded all, save one—
Gamaliel, fair Green Valley's helpless son—
And he on special notice must intrude,
Because first chick of folly's present brood.
To name the rest would prove a cruel task
No sinner would impose, no Christian ask;
They number like the mushrooms on the plain,
Or yellow-jackets after autumn rain;
As candidates from social shadows burst,
Did they appear, and none can say who first.
'Twas rivalry that brought the vice to view,
With growing rivalry it wider grew;
While it was Cutler who first led astray,
'Twas Miller who strewed flowers along the way.
The latter saw the former thought to gain
Cash for his pocketbook, rest for his brain,
And vowed to lay him gently in the shade,
So called on every neighborhood for aid.

Response was speedy; old and young arose,
Threw by the vulgar washing-boards and hoes,
Sold beans for paper, eggs for pen and ink,
And swore with "Cap." and "Hen." to swim or sink.
Still raged the rivalry; the papers vied,
While poor subscribers cursed and printers sighed,
Till it was deemed of ignorance sure proof,
To find no itemizer 'neath a roof.
Directors asked the man in quest of school,
"Are you a correspondent or a fool?"
His answer brought him work with handsome pay,
Or sent him with a stern rebuke away.
The paregoric vainly waited by,
The soothing syrup stood untasted nigh;
Of medicines fond mothers took no note,
But showed sick babes the "items brother wrote."

All space available at last in use,
Still on the privilege was heaped abuse;
To interest, a few had written once,
But this is not the aim of later dunce;
He thinks his glorious calling is to write,
To censure neighbors and to vent his spite,
To watch with jealous eye, and cast a stone
At every little foible but his own.
Slang does for pepper, nonsense serves for salt,
And dullness swears the viand has no fault;
I quote, for those who think its taste improved—
"John Smith don't live where he does now, he's moved!"
If spoken, of dementia this would hint—
Has type such charms that it is wit in print?
Why didn't that dull correspondent write—
"The blackest crow I ever saw was white?"
This would have been a tantamount offense
To all propriety, to taste and sense.
One tells who in December mows his hay;
Another who has frozen feet in May;
One says a neighbor has gone West or East,
To purchase hides of rodents late deceased;
Another tells serenely where and how
Some man has tried obstetrics on a cow!
Here let the blushing muse be very plain,
And charge this groveling item to "Aunt Jane,"

And hope the calf will have more cultured taste,
Than she who thus the rural pen disgraced,
So runs the folly—so write nearly all
The masters of the itemizing scrawl;
Discretion is no more, and candor's flown,
While foolery holds her abdicated throne.

When will this mania cease to vex us? when
Will common sense reclaim the rustic pen?
Our county papers—pick them up and read,
To find the country writers in the lead;
Perhaps we wish to learn about the fuss
Impending 'twixt the Briton and the Russ—
Alas! our eager eyes must read instead
How spunky Jim has thumped poor Billy's head.
Or if our sympathetic sight we strain
To learn how goes the pestilence in Spain,
We note with feelings whence all pity's fled—
"All Pulltight's cats, and half his pups, are dead!"
Or if with all a patriot's love, we pant
To read some fervid eulogy on Grant,
Perchance we see some verses which declare,
"Poor Jimmy's gone to climb the golden stair!"

Ye itemizers, neighbors, friends, forbear—
Forsake the scribbler's desk and quit his chair;
To clowns leave slang, to schoolboys leave coarse chaff,
Nor make one neighbor rave while others laugh.
If news you have—that folks would like to know—
Why, write it, but write only what is so;
Dream not of genius—let your guide be tact,
And ne'er for figment sacrifice plain fact.
If neighbors seem unfriendly or perverse,
Don't write the matter up to make it worse,
As quacks gives dangerous drugs instead of teas,
And torture ailments into fixed disease.
Leave wit to Twain and humor to Burdette—
Food tastes the best from boards by strangers set;
No longer weave a web on gossip's loom,
But give the suffering editors more room.
Now of the bards—how many can we boast?
They cant not like the itemizing host,
But no necessity impels to name
Each opening rosebud in the bower of fame.

Four will I mention who have some renown,
Two rural songsters, two who live in town:
First "B. J. C." who tunes his lyre to love,
Next "Anna Wilson" with each thought above,
Then Eidson with his various graceful lines,
Last Potter who on prosy subjects whines.
The last has time and tact to praise himself—
Books by the other three should grace my shelf.
The score of others—now to them a word:
Be tuneful, if you will, but not absurd;
Let Christmas pass and "gentle spring" draw nigh,
Let "little Johnny" double up and die;
But train your anxious muses to suspense,
Awaiting themes approved by common sense.
For Genius you must vainly sigh and call—
She comes at birth, or never comes at all.

Now must the muse a moment look within,
And quake to see the writer's varied sin—
Ah, lays and items rise in such array
As makes him dread the coming judgment day!
Indeed in him may be discerned the first
Of country scribblers and perhaps the worst.
Was he the youth whom Cyrus met?—alas!
Mute candor shuns the question—let it pass.
In taste so wretched, moral sense so frail,
How can he raise this loud Cassandra wail?
May not the wight in quicksand to his chin
Cry out to others not to venture in?

Misguided Cyrus! now I turn to you,
With cheeks baptized in sympathetic dew!
Though great your error, baffle fell despair,
And spend your days in penitential prayer;
For you there's balm in Gilead, perhaps,
If you mislead no more poor country chaps!



A widow and a widower
In lonely sorrows fared,
Till they at Parson Splicem's hands
Together were repaired.

THE TORNADO.

Kirksville, April 27, 1899.

The Storm's sable banner widely flung
To the startled North and West,
While the long roll would come from the thunder's drum,
Like the moan of a sea distressed.
A whim of the sun, with a fervid stare
Thro' a veil of black or grey,
And a note of distrust in each fitful gust,
As the afternoon wore away.
Brief dashes of rain, with a chill in the air
As the winds capricious veered,
While the cumulus dome to the North went home,
And the sky had almost cleared;
Dark as the midnight in Afric wilds,
The aerial cohorts wheeled,
With an ebon hue that was green to view,
Where the lightning was revealed.
Suddenly, swift as the Mamelukes
At the Pyramids smote the French,
A serpentine crest on the sky in the West
Terror-stricken eyes saw entrench;
Like a Titan winged, it seemed to stoop
Southwest of the fated town,
And the funnel shape darkened hope of escape
From the blight of its awful frown.
Broadships of all of the fleets at sea
Met in Armageddon fray,
Compared with its gloom and besom of doom,
Would be mere Devastation's play.
A roar as of huge aerolites
Jumbled hot in a whirling mass,
An electrical swell with a vortex of hell,
Which took few seconds to pass.
Sweep of the Ruin as wild as when
Worlds derelict shoot thro' space;
From the North and South an omnivorous mouth
Swung its jaws in an awful race.
Mansion, and tree, and the earliest flower
That smiled to the April sun,
When the million-fold blast to the East had passed,
Were riven alike and undone.

Heart of a shingle, a splinter in form,
Driven sheer thro' walnut or oak,
And the ground plowed deep by a whimsical sweep
Of the Demon's relentless stroke;
Wreckage woven in fantastical drifts,
As if by a river flood's wrath—
Demolition and death were the fruit of the breath
Hissing hot in that narrow path.

Time was too short for a prayer or farewell,
There was hardly a plan of flight;
A roar and a crash, and, quick as a flash,
The city knew Horror's worst plight.
The lifeless and homeless counted by scores,
But the spared and the living were kind,
And sympathy well exerted its spell
On heart overpowered, and mind.

Off to the Northeast the monster bore on,
A force to appall and to daze,
While—irony weird—far West there appeared
A hint of the setting sun's rays.
Serene and unvexed by a trace of the cloud,
The night settled down in an hour,
With vague astral winks at the thoughts man thinks
When drunk with the dream of his power.



OCTOBER IN MISSOURI.

October in Missouri—with the magic glow and gleam
A playing like the rainbows in a seraph's morning dream,
While witchery of halcyon haze holds one in downy vise,
And pours upon the mind a reverie of paradise!
Oh, odors from far distant isles whose harbors holds no ships!
Oh, lights ineffable that pale the sunlight to eclipse!
Oh, fairy chimes that sanctify the tranquil twilight hour!
Oh, hopes serene, untarnished by the sins of Eden's bower!
So is your magic blent upon the landscape all about,
That sorrow seems a vagrant whim and trouble seems a doubt!

October in Missouri—with the maple leaves afire,
The hillside oak in purple that could shame the boast of Tyre;
The elm, with orphan creeper close beneath its shelt'ring boughs,
So bright a vision that the eye scarce ling'ring gaze allows;

The gentian and the goldenrod, twin symbols of true faith,
 Like lights to guide the noiseless steps of Summer's wand'ring wraith;
 The willow in a green that hints of Erin's weary woes,
 The ash with mimic meteors where'er a zephyr blows—
 Oh, bards of old who boldly sang of fair and fictive flowers,
 October in Missouri might full well have taxed your powers!
 The flower of Trebizond, whose sweets intoxicate the bee—
 Nelumbo bud that bore young Love down Ganges toward the sea—
 Narcissus, too, and hyacinth—strange is their mythic lore—
 But why here in Missouri turn from Nature's varied store?
 The corn fields shaded down to brown with ears like virgin gold,
 The groves like banners under which the Roman hosts enrolled;
 Each sound subdued like music in a Chopin's weary dream,
 Each sight as soft as if it caught the daylight's dying gleam—
 October in Missouri hands a challenge to the world,
 For all the charms of peace that beg that warfare's flags be furled!
 Oh, you who in the city dwell, half hermit in the din,
 Come, turn nemophilist at once and wealth of spirit win;
 The solemn woods are richer far in health and peace of mind
 Than proud palatial homes of pomp to splendid streets confined;
 If you have loved and lost, or if in loving you are blest,
 Oh, come while hours of heaven you may garner in your breast!
 Methinks the Druid priests of old no rapture ever knew
 Like that which over hill and plain is waiting now for you!
 October in Missouri—by the candor of my heart,
 Missouri in October is its only counterpart!



LYTLE ON THE FOURTH.

Have you listened to Lytle on the Fourth of July,
 When Freedom is waving Old Glory on high;
 When the old and the young, the great and the small,
 Are proud of their homes and the God over all;
 When the cannon deep-mouthed and the tiniest toy
 Are exuberant proofs of a nation's great joy—
 Have you listened to Lytle, of Maryville, say,
 When Liberty grandly observes her own day?
 If not, you have missed, while the old eagle screamed,
 Of reason a feast that is highly esteemed.
 He is not like Henry or Phillips or Gough—
 No Beecher in praise, with an Ingersoll scoff—

But something from all of those worthies and each
He displays in his logic and airs in his speech.
In exordium, Lytle, he's Lytle all through,
Peroration presenting him only anew;
No model, no counterfeit, in the broad land,
None other as Lytle before you may stand.
Adroit in his diction, unique in his style,
He summons the tear-drop and conjures the smile,
And well can he win from the listener's jaw
Patriotic lament or abandoned guffaw.
Audacity—oh yes, that he may permit
To sharpen his sarcasm or feather his wit;
But fervor and fire and pathos and point
Are found in his speeches no critics disjoint.
A wizard in history, waving his wand,
His hearers go with him o'er ocean and land;
They drink from the Arno, gaze down on the Rhine,
And pluck the grapes off Andalusia's own vine;
They battle with Nelson, join Frederick the Great,
And study the glory and ruin of state;
But always they come back with him o'er the sea,
With more love for the land of the brave and the free.
No optimist he, with the blindness of youth,
No pessimist either, he seeks for the truth.
He scourges the power whose political lust
Would trail the fair banner of Freedom in dust;
He lashes the tyrant who lashes his slaves,
And hunts the Pizarros e'en down to their graves;
Denouncing the evil, he stands for the right,
To darkness a foe, an apostle of light.
Ah, high are the tributes he pays to the worth
Of the statesmen and heroes who modernized earth;
And rare are the laurels he showers on the brave,
Who fell on the field or went down in the wave;
And the patriot, under the spell of his lips,
Deems the stars of Old Glory will ne'er know eclipse.
But my muse has grown weary—the pitiful elf—
To judge Lytle aright, you must hear him yourself!

★ ★ ★

We state the fact in black and white,
Let no one be misled;
The yellow journals do no harm—
Where they are never read.

LINES.

Read at an Old Settler's Reunion.

The centuries are growing gray since history began,
 And still expansion is the task and burden known to man;
 Had not the world expanded since it fed old Pompey's pride,
 Or since great Alexander ruled and all his foes defied,
 We yet would grope down near the plane that Darwin's fancy framed,
 A mob of moral pygmies, which 'twere best to leave unnamed.
 Our course is "onward, starward," as we learn from Richard Realf—
 A poet yet lamented, who wrote true as truth itself;
 Our ship of state—Longfellow sang her growing, proud career,
 And James T. Fields has used a pen our destiny to steer,
 And Emerson has told us, too, in his shrewd Yankee style,
 That Opportunity will prove American all the while:
 But still, despite assuring words our bards and sages write,
 Some seek to prove our Realm of Morn is bordering now on night.
 Since Cleopatra weakly wept and Rome's triumvir fell,
 Since Old Hamilcar and his son taught all of war's own hell;
 Since Cæsar waved the rod of power from Hellespont to Gaul,
 And Europe's millions, near and far, were classed his minions all;
 Since Peter, once yclept the Great, and Frederick, none the less,
 In conflict's deluge rode to sway, all drunken on success;
 Since he who came from Corsica, in stature rather small,
 In rocking things and thrones terrene proved greatest of them all;
 Since Washington, as Byron says—of modern poets best—
 Stood up for Freedom's right, "the Cincinnatus of the West"—
 Since all those worthies and their days, in spite of prayers and groans,
 The march of progress has been slow because of blood and bones.
 Expansion—who was he who fought religion's onward sweep?
 The man who sought to dupe the world in his eternal sleep!
 Expansion—who were they who tried to keep their country small,
 And ruined it at last because of their Mongolian wall?
 Expansion! It is nature's law in lowly sphere or high—
 Great God! without the summer's spell what fruitage holds the sky?
 When Jefferson from "Little Nap"—'twas not a nap in vain—
 Bought half this noble realm of ours, and England balked, and Spain,
 Then non-expansionists were found, and thickly they arose,
 But bootless what they called themselves, they were their country's
 foes.

We've known those rank obstructionists since history's dawning light,
 Since Burr killed peerless Hamilton upon Weehawken's height;

Since Hayne and Webster, giants formed a nation's fate to mold,
Stood up for stubborn sentiments above the price of gold,
Since Pomeroy and Vallandigham, when souls of men were tried,
Made mockery of patriotism and love of home defied—
We've known them—aye, we know them now—the Atkinsons and
Hoars,

The Masons and the Hales—oh, yes! we have them by the scores.
The truth will live when error dies, and right will yet prevail;
The grandest land beneath the sun will falter not, nor fail.
We yet shall live, and shall expand—'tis Destiny's decree—
The greatest nation, richest land that touches zone or sea;
Our flag is dyed with patriots' blood, it stands for right and peace,
And, pleasing God, 'twill wave till wars and armaments shall cease.
We run no "Hoch de Kaiser" bluff, nor feed the Czar's weak whim,
But still "Old Glory" waves the time to Freedom's noblest hymn;
The guns of Dewey and of Schley gave no uncertain note,
And where our colors fly today forever let them float!

And what of "Old Missouri?" well, Dave Francis called her "grand,"
And for that term Missourians still warmly grasp his hand;
Tom Benton thought her "Queen of States," John Rippey thinks
the same,

And even to the Kaiser's land her products take her fame;
She's been a potent factor in the nation many a day—
Missouri soil developed, sirs, the genius of Clay;
She has expanded, till, today she is the gold in lump;
A tribute to such pioneers as Buford, Greer and Crump.
A living, growing witness to expansion's greatest truth,
That age alone can overcome the crudities of youth;
That Rome, which stood for destiny, was built not in a day,
And men and things material must grow in Nature's way.
Missouri has a glorious past, her future is secure,
The record of her sons in fadeless annal will endure,
And Schuyler—little Schuyler—she is ready to attest
Before the world that mammoth truth—"small packages are best."
"Grand Old Missouri!" rich in fields, her miners all employed—
I leave her prouder eulogies to Dockery and Lloyd.

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"The heart may break," as Byron said,
"Yet brokenly live on."
But when the purse is broke instead,
A fellow's nearly gone.

BETWEEN TWO DEATHS.

“A good man dies when a boy goes wrong.”
So the adage hands it down;
'Tis a death too sad for the minstrel's song,
Too dire for the cynic's frown.
Between two deaths to endure and strive,
A Tantalus girt with joy,
In spirit dead, but in flesh alive—
God pity the erring boy!
Oh, between two deaths to wander on,
With the demon self to goad,
Where eternal midnight drinks the dawn—
Alas! 'tis a dismal road!
Hope, at morning, tries no wizard spell,
No sunset is leagued with rest;
Ambition is weak to shake the hell
Sin may lodge within the breast.
Alas! it is tearful and sad to see
Our cherished ones quit the strife,
But there is pathos beyond degree
In the irony of life.
Too dead to aspire, to dead to feel—
Too dead for affections glow;
Quite dead to devotion's fond appeal
And only alive to woe!
The wretch whose nobler self was slain
By the waywardness of youth,
In memory finds a ceaseless pain,
An accusing voice in truth.
Driven down beneath the clod
By the self inflicted curse,
He defiles the handiwork of God,
And degrades the universe!
Ah, many years he may suffer through,
Ere his bones to rest are laid,
But the cypress and the funereal yew
Have sunk in his soul their shade.
Two presences still renew his woe,
By the alchemy of sin—
The guileless boy of the long ago,
And the man that might have been.

Temptations are woven about our feet,
Like the snares that capture flies;
If we escape, in our self conceit
We tell the world we are wise.
Oh, fortunate fellow-man, at least
Let charity grace your lot,
And having the peace of Heaven, turn priest
And pray for those who have not!

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AT THE PLAY.

'Twas a love-scene in a little play,
In a quiet country place;
I had trodden the streets the livelong day,
Yet had scarcely known a face.
The hall was in commonplace designed,
The repertoire pledged no art,
But the music's spell was on my mind,
With a deeper on my heart!

"I love you—yes!" the maiden replied
To the question fond and frank—
Then I drifted far on feeling's tide,
And further the scene was blank;
For me was the trustful glance in vain,
And in vain they plighted troth;
Ah, can reason rule the tortured brain,
When love with the loved is wroth?

A voice I had heard on a moonlit night,
In a scene remote from this,
When her eyes were soft in the silver light,
Came back like a wraith of bliss.
The self-same words, in that dear, sweet tone,
Kept murmuring to me still,
And if tears I shed, they were my own,
Uncalled by the player's skill.

I could hear the breeze in the hickory boughs,
I could catch the flowers' perfume,
But, oh, God! I felt those old dear vows
Were the mockery of doom!
A bitterness came upon my heart,
And I marked the play anew,
Thinking—off the stage a kindred part
May be oftentimes less true!

THE GATES OF LIFE.

Oh, the gates of life! those various gates
That swing at the touch of the years!
Where enter the many-hued throng of fates,
Beneath the mosaic arch of dates,
Past the fountain of smiles and tears.

There's a gate that gleams in the morning's ray
With a cherub throned above;
Of all the gates opened in life's glad day,
None other can yield such transport sway—
It is called the gate of Love.

There's a gate that opes on a gay parterre,
Like a picture of Paradise;
But it leads to the caverns of despair,
And cypress weeps o'er the skeletons there—
'Tis the manifold gate of Vice.

There's a narrow gate whose arch displays
The legend of many a name;
But a whisper comes from the laurel sprays,
Of sleepless nights and weary days,
At this narrow gate of Fame.

There's a burnished gate that blazons high,
And pompously swings full wide:
But when conquering tempests muster nigh,
And thunderbolts leap through the startled sky,
Woe! woe to this gate of Pride!

There's a gate that swings where asphodel
Crowns a calm celestial slope;
There a viewless seraph sings so well,
The heart forgets its woes to tell—
And its name is the gate of Hope.

There's a gate swung wide at the close of day
When our toils and sorrows cease—
Oh, when darkness comes upon the clay,
Heaven send us all a brighter ray
Through the beautiful gate of Peace!

THE ISLE OF PEACE.

We have heard of an island far away
In a vague and summery sea,
Where cloud festoons in the halls of day,
Tune all of the winds to glee;
Where birds with more than the bulbul's power
Woo enraptured stellar beams,
And ambrosia breathes from the twilight bower,
Like the woof of seraph's dreams.

We have stood on the shore of the ebbing years,
Where our hopes have pined and died,
And have mingled our bitter, earth-born tears
With the sullenly moaning tide,
While we longed in vain to behold a sail
For that far-off haven bound,
Where the pangs of remorse and doubting fail,
And peace is a monarch crowned.

Oh, my world worn friend, at the solemn hour
When Hesperus welcomes night,
We have sighed full oft for the volant power
To pass to that isle of light;
But not more lost to its sister band
Is the errant Pleiad, now,
Than are we to that all bounteous land,
While cares are upon the brow.

Yet, laboring heart, we will not think
Like Sisyphus we shall toil,
And then at last to oblivion sink
Remote from that hallowed soil;
For the universe owns a Potent Force
With means and ends in accord,
And behind the patient, earnest course
There must lie a just reward.

Oh, my brother pilgrim, though the way
Be so long, the struggling soul
While it knows the burden of the clay,
May not reach that tranquil goal;
Yet there comes a time when mortal care,
And mortal distress must cease,
And then, proud mariners, we shall fare
To that beautiful Isle of Peace.

HOLLYHOCK.

Hollyhock, oh hollyhock!
 With your pearly white,
How my weary heart you mock
 With sad memory light!
It was long and long ago—
 Years have lost the date;
Ere my spirit dimmed its glow,
 Or complained at fate.

On the linden there was bloom
 Where the bee sought wealth,
Passing breezes bore perfume,
 Happiness and health;
Orioles within the elm,
 Human cares above,
Poured their notes down from a realm
 Of untroubled love.

Overhead a vapor craft
 Sailed the tranquil sky,
Smiling blue both fore and aft
 As my Mary's eye;
Onward bore the graceful cloud,
 Over hills and streams,
With hope's brightness all endowed,
 Frail as lovers' dreams.

With my Mary, summer eve,
 At the gate I stood;
We were taking hopeful leave,
 Brave as lovers could.

Hollyhocks smiled to the sun,
 Round the green lawn's edge,
Mary smiled and gave me one
 As a votive pledge.

“By you bright, unsullied cloud,
 Type of Nature's truth,
This shall ward off harm.” I vowed
 With the hope of youth.

Ruthless absence came between,
 Death claimed Mary then;
We who knew that parting scene
 Never met again.

Hollyhock, oh hollyhock!
Can there be a clime,
Where no hand of death may knock
At the doors of time?
If there is, my Mary waits
There with no farewell,
Where within the pearly gates
Grows the immortelle.

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TWO ISLANDS, MR. HOAR.

An islands for the anarchists—
That's business now, I say;
Some lonely spot where noisome mists
Hang heavy o'er the day.
Those vile assassins write their creed
Of ruin down in gore,
And, come to think it, we need
Two islands, Mr. Hoar.

Two rocky islands, drear and small
Where ne'er a plant can bloom,
And each of which the French might call
The Devil's ante-room;
And have them with long leagues between
Unvexed by sail or oar—
Ah, just to keep our record clean,
Two islands, Mr. Hoar.

Two islands, where the rattlesnake
And skunk can multiply,
And midnight stars, when vapors break,
Shine blood red in the sky;
Unhindered, still the noxious weed
Increases more and more;
The Mosts and Goldmans are a breed—
Two islands, Mr. Hoar!

Two islands for the darksome cult
Of murder and despair—
Two islands, for the sure result
Of ne'er a baby there!
Draw up your bill—and wall about,
And closely guard each shore;
But we must have, beyond a doubt,
Two islands, Mr. Hoar!

ONLY A YEAR.

Only a year 'twixt hereafter and here,
A glimmer of smile and a shadow of tear,

Only a year—a year;

Only a flake from the pinion of Time,
Snow from the mountains of Destiny's clime,
Touched with the ludicrous and the sublime,

Only a year—a year.

Faces we knew have passed from our view,
Under strange heavens or under the dew,

Only a year—a year;

Hopes that were cherished have vanished away,
Even like stars at the portals of day—
Ambitions and visions—ah, where now are they?

Only a year—a year!

In the battle of soul for higher control,
Room for the tournament, strength for the goal,

Only a year—a year;

But, oh, for the vanquished, and oh, for the slain,
And, alas, for the victors who yet may remain
To lift up mortality's feeble refrain,

Only a year—a year!

Soul stars have set and mortality's debt
Presses more sorely and heavily yet,

Only a year—a year;

Fall of the seasons and winter of life—
Sorrow and joy alike fruitage and strife—
Ah, well, if our pathway with duty is rife,

Only a year—a year!

Only a year, as we measure it here,
A round of our orbit, a race of our sphere,

Only a year—a year;

Happy, indeed, if our steps have been sure,
On from temptations that blight and allure,
On to the realm of the fadeless and pure,

Only a year—a year!

WET, ER DRY.

I ain't no schoolboy any more,
Back thar at Goshen Brow,
But somehow I feel kinder sore,
'Cause I'm so different now.
We useter play the town ball game,
With vim to do or die,
An' first two fellers thar'd claim
The throw of "Wet, er Dry."

Now, I like new things purty well,
An' don't collect antiques,
But that old game we found excel,
Each noon hour thar for weeks.
No matter if 'twas thawed or froze,
If winds was soft or high,
Each feller waited until chose
By rite of "Wet, er Dry."

Long Sandy useter to be first choice
'Cause he, like measles, caught,
Next chooser then of Shorty Joyce
An' his great battin' thought;
Then so on down to Freckled Ben,
An' at the last, well, I
Come in some under Number Ten,
When weighed by "Wet er Dry."

Next followed throwin' for the bat,
The strictest of the tests,
That made our hearts go pitty-pat,
An' rassel with our vests.
Then thar was scads of crossin' out,
An' waitin' for a fly,
Inspirin' hope an' witherin' doubt
Called out by "Wet, er Dry."

Ah me, the hero he appeared
Who brought his side back in,
An' how at him we allus sneered
Who first base failed to win!
What frownin' or approvin' looks
Would allus greet each "eye,"
Tho' it, alas! was not for books,
Back thar in "Wet, er Dry."

I may seem on the ancient shelf,
A rhymin' of this game,
But seems to me that fate itself
Keeps playin' at the same.
I wonder, when I am crossed out,
How many folks will sigh,
And, musin', turn the past about,
With lashes—"Wet, er Dry."

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AGAIN.

"Ianthé, we shall meet again."
The olden Greek averred,
And since his day the sons of men
Like thoughts with joy have heard;
It may be near or may be far,
That mystic other clime—
We know by all we feel and are
Life mocks the tricks of time.
Prophetic verity within
My breast affords a view,
Linked closely with all that has been
Of fate between us two;
And, tho' I never speak your name,
Or know you on the street,
Where tongues are true and passion tame,
We two again shall meet.
I know not what confession there,
Or what reproach, will rise,
Our speech can never be less fair,
Or we be more unwise.
Fate is an accident of change,
And error is not crime;
Truth will be neither harsh nor strange,
In that reunion clime.
Sahara's sands are not more wide
Than now the chasm between,
But you and I will curb our pride
In some serener scene.

The magic of a flower's perfume
Calls up the long ago—
Somewhere beyond this vale of gloom,
We two shall meet—and know.



THANKSGIVING THOUGHTS.

For the truce of Autumn weather,
Liks a summer dream of snow,
Heat and cold so wrought together,
That the blandest breezes blow;
For the sunshine, blithely hailing
All the senses with its smile,
We would offer, Power Unfailing,
Thanks we owe thee all the while!

For the horn of plenty, pouring,
As a fixed star pours its light,
All the gifts of Nature's storing,
In our pessimism's despise;
For the welfare of our nation,
Pledged far less to sword than plow,
Architect of all creation,
We would humbly thank thee now!

For the wand of Progress, waving,
Like the streaks of dawn, away
All the darkness for enslaving
Unto man his brother clay;
For the proof of growing better,
In the world's eternal youth,
Creditor, to naught a debtor,
We express our thanks in truth!

For each voice and pen uplifting,
Like the wind that bears a cloud,
Holding each from idle drifting,
And from frenzied wrong, the crowd;
For the thankfulness inspiring
All, of low or lofty ranks,
We would offer, Guide Untiring,
Thee today our heartfelt thanks!

PENITENCE.

Sometimes my better self comes back
 Across the plain of wasted years,
And sheds along the desert track
 The rain of unavailing tears.
Sometimes it stays one fleeting hour,
 Hope whispering it will ne'er depart,
Ere rises in its tyrant power
 The ruthless demon of my heart.

Sometimes contentment can restore
 The lost Atlantis of my joy,
And for a time, upon its shore,
 I feel myself once more a boy.
But, ah! my restless memory wakes
 From her sweet vision of delight;
Again my fair Atlantis quakes,
 And—slowly sinking—fades from sight.

Sometimes a voice thrills thro' my soul,
 With music of broken string,
Till o'er my mind serenely roll
 Dreams lost when early love took wing.
But disenchantment follows soon,
 That voice can charm me but in vain;
When love's sweet lute is out of tune,
 A random note is rife with pain.

Ixion, on his awful wheel,
 Knew not a torture worse than those,
Who thro' a bitter life must feel
 The scourge of self-inflicted woes.
The beacon lures, but their frail bark
 Copes not with passion's swelling gale;
They drift o'er waters rough and dark,
 With shivered mast and tattered sail.

My better angel, come once more,
 I'm longing to abjure each sin;
The future lies untried before,
 Unsaddened by the might have been.
Come to me thro' this dreary night,
 Long, long have you been far away;
I need your guidance and your light—
 My better angel, come and stay!

THE WIRE.

The wire has many tones
In the pulsing atmosphere;
Wild with laughter, weird with groans,
Ever changing on the ear.
Tho' motionless are sounder and key,
When the spirits of the air
Wanton mirth and riot dare,
Secrets seem to struggle there
 To be free.

The moaning of the wire,
When the wind is sobbing low—
Ah, 'tis like a demon's lyre,
Tuned to wailing and to woe;
How dismal is its sound in the night!
One will shudder at the thought,
Of the news it may have caught,
Of the grief and heart-ache wrought
 Since the light.

The shrieking of the wire,
When the blast is fierce and high,
Sounds alarm of flood and fire
Where avails no human cry.
Methinks the shrieking wire might be still.
Anxious hearts are by it stirred
Dreading tidings best unheard,
For impatient is the word
 Of our ill.

The mutt'ring of the wire,
When the storm scud rolls in sight—
As it tells the tempest's ire,
How it trembles in its fright!
A warning by its plaint, has it told?
In the turmoil of the storm,
Will the fell tornado form,
And will hearts now beating warm,
 Soon be cold?

The murmur of the wire,
When the gentle breeze goes by,
Like the dirge of old desire,
Buried long beneath a sigh—

'Tis rife with dreams of days ever flown.
Sunny were those days and bright—
Ah, I deem the wire to night
Has a sob for lost delight
In its tone.



A LOST LOVE.

Oh, I knew a love in my early years—
A love I may know no more—
And her eyes beamed soft as the ordered spheres
That spangle the midnight's shore.
Her laugh was sweet as the chimes we deem
With the song of fairies blent,
And her presence was all a shimmering dream
Of a rapture and content.

A filmy woof of the golden morn
Was wrought with her silken hair,
And the zephyrs in old Eden born
Might have sighed to wanton there.
Ah, the blithest moods she ever knew
Were touched with a bright regret,
And I have thought in her musing view
The Here and Hereafter met.

Elysium all about us spread,
While we wandered fond and free,
And flowers meet for a houri's bed
Starred the slope to the future's sea.
'Twas little I dreamed of strife or care,
'Twas little I recked of doom;
Psyche had not walked then with despair,
Or shuddered beside the tomb.

An errant ecstasy was her sigh,
Her glance was a flood of bliss.
And her blush was pure as that on the sky,
Which follows the morning kiss.
Her songs were as sweet as Israfel
From his heart-strings e'er may pour,
But I fathom the magic of their spell,
And weep my delight no more.

This earliest, fondest love of mine—
 One long ago eve she fled,
When autumn's scarlet burned on the vine,
 And half summer's hopes were dead.
Oh, whither she went I can not tell,
 But I know she went for aye,
And I feel she was too divine to dwell
 With a thing of sordid clay!

At times, when the muse of twilight thrills,
 And the dead past claims a tear,
Some vicarious angel lifts my ills,
 And I deem that she is near;
But illusion fails—the barriers stand—
 I must bear the ills I bore,
And I vainly think on a guiding hand
 I may clasp—ah, nevermore!



THANKSGIVING STANZAS.

Let no vain oracle today
 Like Priam's daughter wail,
Our nation knows an upward way,
 Its purpose shall not fail.
Around us empires rise and sink,
 A blunder makes or mars,
But our own land is free to drink
 The sky-wine of the stars!

Be gratitude in every heart,
 On every lip be praise;
Pour troubles on oblivion's mart,
 Give feud-scores to the blaze!
Let Charity's soft knock be heard
 At doors of urgent need,
And may devotion's earnest word
 Be pattern for the deed!

For all we hope, for all we know
 Of plenty, peace and love—
Oh, man! for all things here below
 Waft fervent thanks above.

Columbia is Freedom's home,
The dearest she has trod;
Then speed the tidings thro' the dome,
Columbia for God!

Colossus of the mighty West!
Whom sister nations see,
And by their envy prove the best—
Our hearts go up for thee!
Live on, thou votive day! live on,
Muezzin of the year!
And still may thy succeeding dawn
Break on our growing sphere!

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JUNE.

Oh, rare and bright and fleeting June!
Fair time of glee and song;
When Eros sets the world in tune,
And Hymen sways the throng;
When ev'n the spirit broken slave,
Between the whiplash and the grave,
May half forget his wrong—
It would beatify our sphere,
Could June continue all the year.

Oh, days of visions, nights of dreams,
Oh, weeks of high conceit,
When with deep music in the streams,
Realities we cheat;
When charmed by all the magic glow,
Supernal ecstasies we know,
Amid solstitial heat;
When hearts awake with new desire,
And world-worn souls once more aspire.

The gifts from Flora widely spread,
In bright red, white and blue,
As if some votive tears she shed,
And honored freedom, too;
The song-thrush and the oriole
Entrancing all the air with soul,
If soul bird ever knew;
The stars like home-lights showing bright—
Ah, June is from the realms of light!

The emerald landscape stretches far
Time's only hue eterne,
And prints to the horizon's bar
The lesson faith must learn;
The clouds—how gracefully they go,
With Love above and Hope below,
And summer's breath astern!
Oh, grant me fates or late or soon
Beyond this life a land of June!



RIGHT HERE IN OLD MISSOURY.

Right here in Old Missouri—why, bless your blinkin' eyes!
We've suorely got the ante-room to perfect Paradise!
Her skies are full of tonic and her breezes full of cheer,
An' she affords us solid health and comfort all the year;
Her blessiu's like the stars above, no mortal mind can count—
Methuselum he died too soon to 've tried the whole amount;
Of course, sometimes she spills a drap of wormwood in our cup,
But it's a jolt in kindness dealt to stir the sugar up.

Right here in Old Missouri—his soul is ruther small
Who can't find joys in winter time, in summer, spring or fall;
The Aprile johnny-jump-up an' the airly rose in May,
They sort o' wake a young chap up an' give his feelin's play;
The summer apples on the tree to tempt a Grecian Jove,
The autumn peaches in the yard, persimmons in the grove;
The spare rib and the turkey when the wintry winds are rough—
Oh, when it comes to seasons, life is seasoned well enough!

Right here in Old Missouri—just show me if you please,
What damsels in the Angel Lodge have taken more degrees;
Their eyes are summer bright with blue, or black, or brown, or gray,
And when they give a second's glance it ha'nts you for a day!
They can excel in everything—I swear it on the Book—
And some of them can even show their mammies how to cook.
I've seen them in their calico, I've seen them in their silk,
And ne'er a place this side of Heaven can duplicate their ilk!

Right here in Old Missouri—where punkins go to waste,
A-spoilin' pies I sometimes think St. Peter'd like to taste;
Where fruits in autumn grow to look so like the real gold,
That all our misers early die of more than they can hold;

Where ev'n the quail knows such extremes of quiet and delight,
He scolds his old Kentucky foe, a feller named Bob White,
Where water in the crystal springs has somehow got the knack,
If movers taste it when they start, of bringin' them right back.

Right here in Old Missouri—the state where I was born—
A grain of perseverance yields at least a peck of corn,
And he who allus makes the ends of plan and labor meet,
Can have his bins a-bustin' with potatoes, oats and wheat;
Yet some men kimbo up the nose until it warps the mouth,
An' go to hunt the flitter tree out West, or North, or South;
I hold their judgment ruther cheap, their plans of little worth—
Why, I have seen Missouri smoke a-comin' back to earth!

Right here in Old Missouri—Jim Rigley made a stake,
Not jist to hide it in a chest, but all for comfort's sake;
He had the peace of honesty and earnest labor's thrift,
An' where he saw an urgent need right there he dropped a gift;
He had religion's blessed hope of mansions in the sky,
But it so happened that one day Jim took his bed to die;
"Up yander!" whispered he, just as the preacher closed his prayer,
"But, goin' from Missouri, I may get homesick there!"



DRIVEN.

It was eve—the wind had shifted,
And the muttering storm had drifted
To the eastward, where I saw a rarely gorgeous rainbow glow:
To my spirit bowed with sorrow
It bespoke a bright tomorrow,
And I thought to cease to borrow
From the future useless woe—
Woe which those who thirst insanely for false pleasures here below,
Reap in tears, in folly sow.

I was faint and I was lonely—
With an evil angel only,
I had wandered since the morning thro' the tempest and the rain.
"I will lose," said I, "in slumber
All those ills without a number,
Which my heavy heart encumber,
And distract my tortured brain."
But the hope was all delusion and the effort all in vain;
I could not forget my pain.

Naught of rest had come to cheer me,
When I felt a presence near me,
Emphasized by silken rustle and the rose's rich perfume.
"Go!" I shrieked, "false cyprian, leave me!
Think no more thou canst deceive me!
Pitying Heaven will yet reprove me,
In the twilight of my doom!
With thee I no more will dally in the haunted, midnight gloom,
Near the portals of the tomb!"

Tho' my diction was emphatic,
And my gestures were dramatic,
No effect my speech impassioned had upon the being there:
She was sweetly on me smiling,
Some appeasing terms compiling,
And there was a bold beguiling
In her attitude and air;
And I had small hope of ransom as I saw anew the snare,
And I moaned in my despair.
Soon she questioned: "Faithless lover!
What in me canst thou discover
That appears to thee so hideous and horrible of late?—
Willing hands that used to boat us
Over Lethe, fanned by Notus,
Past the lily and the lotus,
Still upon our pleasure wait—
Come, and prove to me thy bosom has not learned the hell of hate,
By a walk thro' Pleasure's gate!"

All my will I felt was failing,
All my courage unavailing.
But I owed my manhood something of an earnest effort yet;
So I said: "In thy caresses,
In thy glances and thy tresses,
Is a passport to excesses,
That are madness and regret:
All the past I may atone for, and my heart may cease to fret"—
But, Oh, God! who could forget?
O'er her features blazed her anger,
And her air lost all its languor,
While her histrionic accents beat upon my frightened ear;
"Fool!" she cried, "since thou hast won me,
Dost thou think that thou canst shun me?
Man's abuses have undone me,

And my vengeance is severe;
To the inmost wiles of Afric shouldst thou fly in futile fear,
Think not I would not be near!

“I have many tricks of magic,
Darkly potent, weirdly tragic,
And the mistress thou hast chosen evermore is thine to claim;
And the peri of thy dreaming
Is a false but brilliant seeming,
And in vain is all thy scheming
For true happiness or fame.

Come with me—no longer sigh for luster faded from thy name,
Come, and make the most of shame!”

I was faint and I was heartless,
Will was lacking, tongue was artless,
But I cried in desperation: “Curse thee! leave me—leave me now!”
But in vain was imprecation,
For she mocked my indignation,
And with haughty incantation,
That annulled my latest vow,
Summoned serpents from around me till the dew stood on my brow,
And to speak I knew not how!

Oh, I could resist no longer!
Will grew weaker, passion stronger—
And I clasped the vile enchantress, and for honor had no care.
Thro' the shades of night she led me,
While a thousand vampires bled me,
And each better impulse fled me,
But I never may say where!
Manhood! of this dark enchantress let me charge you now—beware—
Heed this moaning of despair!

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OUR BILL.

His life began its ample span
Scarce half way back to Tyler;
Tho' now great fame attends his name—
The name of Hall of Schuyler.
Once penniless,
I rather guess
The check his fist indorses
Goes slick, jeewhiz!
And proves he is
Napoleon of horses.

He's prompt and fair, and doesn't care
To higgler or to dicker,
And there is none beneath the sun
Can size a horse up quicker;
He's popular,
And, near and far,
Most men pass other dealers,
To sell to Bill,
Straightforward still
With kickers and with squealers.

He's made his stake, and more can make
By potent thought and labor,
And while he's thrived he has contrived
Somewhat to help his neighbor.
He flats the sharps,
And never harps
On "similibus curantur;"
A rival's whim
Of "a horse on him"
Finds Bill a disenchanter.

He's W. P., from home, you see,
But that is stiff and formal;
At home he's Bill, which always will
Sound rational and normal.
Silk hat and vest
He's long possessed,
Of mode he's no defiler,
But he's the same
In self and name
That was a boy in Schuyler.

He ev'n succeeds in selling steeds
To Hottentot and Zulu—
Perchance Queen Lil's was picked from Bill's
In far off Honolulu.
Such rare success
Deserves no less
Than local pride and praising;
Admiring eyes
Behold him rise
By nerve and tact amazing.

A BURIAL.

We buried her when earth was white,
But whiter in the Land of Light,
Her soul would seem to mortal sight,
Than flakes from wintry air;
Earth's gloom is round me while I write,
But she is there—Up There.

Yes, she is there, and we are here—
Uncircumscribed by hemisphere,
Untouched by Time's corroding year,
Her new found home is fair;
Faith peers through Sorrow's votive tear,
And sees her there—Up There.

We walk the all-pervading gloom
That wears the midnight shade of doom,
She threads the amaranthine bloom
That knows celestial care;
Thou art misleading, silent tomb!
For she is there—Up There.

Long shall we miss her gentle tone,
Her smile, that like the sunlight shone,
Her love that made all cares her own,
Her hope that mocked despair;
But these shall all again be known,
When meeting there—Up There.

Thro' trackless interstellar space,
She may look down our steps to trace,
And strengthen us for life's stern race
With many a saintly prayer;
God grant us all the saving grace
To meet her there—Up There!

* * *

CHRISTMAS LINES.

Hello, old friend, an' how-dy-do!
It's a long coon's age since I saw you.
Like all the folks that I've known yet,
I remember mostly to forget,
But, somehow still in every place
In fancy I see your honest face.

Well, how do you hit life's strenuous trail,
 And how do you stem the starboard gale?
 Ah, me, old boy! the times we've had
 Would drive a Puritan soul stark mad,
 An' I am afraid some fuel we burned,
 Ere the lesson of winter we had learned.
 I'm wiser now than I useter be,
 But with a big M no more spell "me,"
 While Time, that we once thought so slow,
 With the bit in his mouth, don't listen to "whoa."
 I've taken on an expansion front,
 But my laugh is tuned to a basso grunt,
 My line of endeavor is low with slack,
 I'm backward because of an aching back.
 Old man, is your hair a-takin' on gray,
 An' have your dreams quit the solar way?
 I thought I would try, this Christmas time,
 To put my thoughts in unpracticed rhyme,
 To sort o' remind you of the days
 When our skies never put on smoke or haze,
 But were blue an' bright the whole year through,
 An' our souls seemed bathed in morning dew.
 If your appetite's good, an' you sleep sound,
 And the ghosts of conscience don't hang round,
 I reckon some horse sense you have used,
 While toward the port of Whither you've cruised.
 I have no great reason to complain;
 I've earned some good luck, likewise some pain;
 An' the world has been quite as good to me
 As I to it—let the ledger be.
 I say, old man, if we were still boys,
 I'd send you a lot of the newest toys,
 An' a wish for a Merry Christmas time,
 Sincere as Watts in his hymn-book rhyme—
 But we have learned that an empty wish
 Is a hook that never lands a fish;
 An' so instead of a trifling gift,
 I'll give you the promise of a lift.
 If your burden has to oppression grown,
 An' you bend beneath its weight alone,
 In place of a Merry Christmas, friend,
 I wish you a journey smooth to the end.

GEOGRAPHICAL.

There is a desert that men call Life,
The home of a wandering Doom,
'Tis clad with the skeleton heaps of strife,
And its air feeds the fell simoom.
By the sunrise sweeps the River of Time,
Always reticent as the Sphinx,
To the West lies the Ocean of Death sublime,
Where the fathom line vainly sinks.

Two oases smile in this desert waste,
They are known as Love and Hope,
And safe in their sheltering bounds men taste
The fruits of a lost Eden's slope.
In this the amaranths fain disclose
A hint of their mystical plot;
In that there is wealth of the red, red rose,
And the blue forget-me-not.

Two regions stretch wearily, zone by zone,
Where the goblins of Midnight play,
As Tomorrow the further clime is known,
The nearer is Yesterday.
The former is touched with hope and fear,
For its vales no foot has trod—
And well if we found the latter near
To our fellow man and God.

Far away the horizon's dull expanse
Seems a miracle to confess,
Where like some Titan in Fate's romance,
Towers the Mountain of Success.
The palm and the laurel clothe its steeps,
But triumph is girt by snow,
And the victor looks on mangled heaps
Of the vanquished far below.

Oh, never a ship o'er that tide of the West
Finds the gulf-stream of return,
And no echo comes from the Isles of the Blest,
Where we deem the beacons burn.
The billows speak all the night and day,
But our hearts are dull with dust,
No mortal can tell us aught they say,
And so we can only trust.

HAW CREEK PHILOSOPHY.

What's the use of talkin' if the roads are rough?
Only keep a-walkin', you'll get there time enough.
It's idle to be whinin' while the rain-drops pound,
The sun will be a-shinin' long before you drown'd.
Allus keep a-strivin', don't you never quit,
If your team's worth drivin', make 'em show their grit.
In the field keep hoein', don't get lazy-proud—
Any horn worth blowin' should be tooted loud.
Life is not a fiction, nor a circus joke,
You will meet with friction, may be, too, some smoke.
But just let it thunder, let the lightning strike,
Folks'll stare in wonder as you go down the pike.
Anything worth doin' is worth doin' well,
Patience don't mean ruin—takes it to excel.

Pretty girls are plenty, good wives everywhere,
Sixty years or twenty, still your chance is fair.
Do a little gruntin' when the logs are rolled,
An' keep on a-huntin' for a better hold.
Don't kill yourself a liftin', nor strain your eyesight dim,
An' never trust to driftin' where reason says to swim.
There's no use in braggin', don't be an egotist,
For too much tongue waggin' provokes an ugly fist.
Be good as your neighbors, with some good to spare,
An' reward for labors you'll find everywhere.
Go it everlastin'—prop the doors that slam,
An' while some are fastin' you'll have flour and ham!



LOST EDEN.

Back to thee fain would I wander,
Eden lost so long to me!
In my starless night I ponder
On the life deserted yonder,
When my heart was fresh and free.
Dark as Styx, the stream of Never
Mocks my fondest hope's endeavor,
And excludes me far forever,
From the Eden lost to me.

Fair was Eden as a peri
 In her brightest dreams may see:
 Oh, worn Psyche now is weary
 Of her path all lone and dreary,
 And to summer scenes would flee;
 But in vain is all her yearning—
 Beacons hopelessly are burning—
 O'er the stream is no returning
 To the Eden lost me!

Bathed in light and steeped in blisses,
 Was the Eden lost to me;
 Daisy, lily and narcissus,
 Fond and pure as angel kisses,
 Starred it like a sleeping sea:
 Little Cupids sported nigh me,
 And in frolic to defy me,
 In nelumbos boated by me,
 In the Eden lost to me.

Bright as "chains of dew on Hermon,"
 Gleamed the morning's purity;
 Conscience wore her snowy ermine,
 And each bird-song was a sermon,
 In the Eden lost to me.

Sweet as Israfeli's singing,
 Harps and lutes unseen were ringing,
 Every balmy zephyr bringing
 Thrills of heavenly melody.

There, Lorinda! there was given
 All my spirit's wealth to thee!
 But the fates were o'er us driven—
 And I lost my hope of heaven,
 In the Eden lost to me!

Time! why rest art thou denying
 To the heart worn out with sighing,
 While the worm that is undying
 Feasts upon my misery.

While despair within me rages,
 Vex me not with sophistry!
 Tell me not, ye vain-wise sages,
 Stars that measure out the ages,
 Measure not our woe to be!

Was it Sirius or Orion,
The lost Pleiad or the Lion,
Lured me from my sunny Zion,
And the Eden lost to me?

Still in fleeting dreams I view thee,
Eden lost for aye to me—
Seeming fairer than I knew thee—
Crystal streamlets gliding through thee,
In a shimmering ecstasy;
Oh, the anguish then of waking,
For my heart anew is breaking,
And my very soul is quaking,
With a hopeless misery!

Back to Eden I would wander—
To the Eden lost to me;
But 'tis mockery to ponder
O'er the life deserted yonder,
When my heart was fresh and free.
Doom itself the hope dismisses—
From the caverns and abysses,
Maniac echo moans and hisses—
“Lost in Eden—lost to thee!”

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A MOOD.

A fancy of the South wind born,
As blithe as hope, as true as truth,
A shimmer of a vanished morn,
A link between me and my youth;
It reached me when o'er twilight's shore
The shadows of the night grew dense,
While all the sky and landscape wore
What used to charm my innocence.
'Twas truer than a fleeting dream,
And softer than a memory,
And for a moment I could deem
The long ago came back to me.
The bells of homing cattle played
A melody I loved of yore,
And fragrance on the vesper shade
The white-robed hawthorn seemed to pour.

A mystic presence thrilled my mood,
As music thrills the sleeping sea;
I felt what seemed my solitude
Was sacred now to her and me.
The air, soft as the wanton tress
My cheek in days long gone had known,
Electric with her old caress—
How could I deem myself alone?

Ah, mock me not, Philosophy!
I build my faith on your despair;
My early love, where'er she be—
I know her spirit met mine there.
'Twas but a mood, yet taught me more
Than ink or speech of learned men;
It taught me, when life's cares are o'er,
That love and I shall meet again.



A SUMMER SUNSET.

All afternoon the sky had worn
A deeper gloom than those who mourn;
From cloud wreaths denser than the smoke
That was Pompeii's winding cloak,
The thunder like some sullen foe,
Anow had muttered vague and low.
Like some embattled host, the clouds
Moved on in ever thickening crowds—
Like Ypsilanti's sturdy few,
Far south they marshaled full in view,
And then, like Pickett's heirs of fame,
On up the zenith steep they came.

The ebon phalanx swept away,
The left behind a dome of gray;
The wind grew weary—sighed its last—
Save where some vagrant zephyr passed.
The rain came down on glen and mead,
A benediction in each bead—
No gale or tumult to annoy,
The drops seemed Nature's tears of joy.

At last the watcher might behold
Low down the west a thread of gold,
Where sunbeams had conspired to pour
A splendor Parsees must adore.

Then from the shore of cloudless day
Was shed a reassuring ray,
As trials steeped in sorrow's surge
Bear tints of blessings at the verge.
A transformation swept the sky,
That staggered reason, dazed the eye;
A sea of color rose and spread,
It blazed afar and glowed o'erhead;
A volatile, aerial blush,
Too airy for the painter's brush,
It touched each cloud, suffused the whole,
And spoke in silence to the soul.

Here primal tints appeared to vie,
There wonder traced a nameless dye—
With beryl, jasper, chrysoprase,
And other woof of softened rays,
It was, in sooth, a fleeting scene,
Yet worth a year to view, I ween.
When other tints had fled or failed,
A wondrous amber glow prevailed,
And then, as rich as roses bloom,
And fall from June's solstitial loom,
An arched Colossus grandly spanned
The eastern stretch of rain-kissed land.

It was a sight to call apart
The scheming mind and sordid heart,
And make the soul forget each vice,
To muse beyond on Paradise!
'Twere well, methinks, if days of woe
Might fade and fail with such a glow—
And better still, if, in death's hour,
Our Guardian angel has the power
To cheer the final parting scene
With light so grand, yet so serene!

CHANGE.

This eve a sadness in my heart
Is coining tears that may not start;
I muse on mutability.
And, lo, what change there is in me!
Once I could weep o'er playmates' ills,
And sigh for froward whippoorwills,
But now my grief no more may rain—
The fount of tears is dried by pain.
The wintry sun in splendor set,
But left behind a deep regret;
There was a something in his rays—
A ghostly light of other days—
That many a pensive picture cast
Upon the curtain of the past.
I know not why the sunset hour
Most wakes sad retrospective power;
But then it is we mortals feel
Dead sympathies upon us steal,
From Psyche's charnel, dark and deep,
Where all our shattered idols sleep.
'Tis then old friendships, broken long,
Come back a sad, reproachful throng;
Then like notes from a ruined lute,
We hearken tones forever mute;
Then Eros, helpless, cold and still,
May warm with some remembered thrill.
No day to evening wears its morn,
No festal hall but grows forlorn;
No mortal heart retains its youth—
Change is Time's eldest, truest truth.
Ephemeral is all on earth
Of rapture, loveliness or mirth.
As melts the morning planet's ray,
Our fondest treasures pass away:
As fades the pansy or the rose,
So something from our being goes.
Life is a play, throughout whose scenes
The unexpected intervenes;
Such doubts its hurried acts attend,
'Tis only certain in its end.

Associations old and dear
We bury with the secret tear;
Born like a meteor in the sky,
Our brightest visions flash and die;
Before we know a treasure's worth,
'Tis gone like childhood's rosy mirth.
Where stood the home, on yonder hill,
A locust tree is standing still,
But house or owner nevermore
Will there be as in time of yore;
This sleeps his long, undreaming sleep,
That moulders in a rubbish heap.
The household— it is fate's decree,
That children grown must sundered be,
And they are scattered, some are wed—
Ah, fortunate if none are dead!
A lecture has that spot for me,
On life and mutability.
Another home I mark each day,
Which tenantless yields to decay;
Of those who in it dwelt of old,
Save one, all lie beneath the mold.
A desolation saddens there,
And sobbing memories fill the air.
'Tis all a dreary field of change,
O'er which my pensive thought can range,
The trees my boyhood loved are dead,
Or lonely stand, their beauty fled;
The voices once at evening heard,
Greet me not with an olden word.
Where are those eyes, whose speaking glance
Could make a heaven of the dance?
Alas! those orbs reflect no ray,
Or beam for others far away.
How many doubly dead and lost
Thought's magic bounds to-night have crossed—
Dead by a friendship's hopeless death,
That leaves a venom in the breath!
Old friends! we parted long and wide,
O'er deep distrust and stormy pride.
Change is our lesson, change our task,
And more or less man need not ask;
A Marius is each and all,
Who mourns some Carthage in its fall.

A THOUGHT OR TWO.

The world ain't run by politics
As much as some men think;
If 'twas some Congressmen would fix
To just draw pay and drink.
This talk about the good old times
Of high-priced beet and squash,
A-bein' squelched by party crimes,
Is mostly bubbly bosh.

I know some legislation hurts
And some helps Uncle Sam,
But law can't give back wore out shirts,
Or make a snail a clam.
Some people claim—they're awful thick,
They tell me, in the West—
That Congress works the button trick,
And good luck does the rest.

It's pretty funny, now, I swan,
To hear this fiat scheme,
Tho' some say it is founded on
A sort of opium dream.
If I thought it was right, kerwhack!
Would Congress get a batch
Of pleas and cusswords callin' back
My last year's turnip patch!

The world don't grease itself with law
So much as honest sweat—
More use of hand and less of jaw
Would nearly knock out debt.
The times change mostly, I maintain,
With change in trade and toil—
With application of the brain
To newest craft and soil.

Where is the mast-producin' oak?
Where are the home-knit socks?
Could Congress "act" back in the yoke
The patient workin' ox?
I've watched this evolution some
In wanderings North and South—
And brain and muscle gets the plum,
And cheats the noisy mouth.

I want but little here below,
As some old poet wrote;
I'm after that with ax and hoe,
And don't bank on my vote.
If I mis-manage, that's my fault,
It ain't the nation's ills;
If I don't earn my common salt,
Must Congress pay my bills?

I say again, I know some laws
Knock good times galley west,
But now's the very time to pause,
And choose the very best;
Let Uncle Sam coin cash along,
And keep his treasury full;
Then let us pull together stroug,
And quit this pullin' wool!



“ON THE WABASH.”

According to Noah Webster's lore,
And to it great faith is pinned,
The word “Wabash” means a cloud before
An equinoctial wind;
But the “Banner Route” as it runs today
Proves Noah not up to date,
For no cloud ever sailed the ether way
That could hit for an hour its gait.

It leaves the equinox whim behind—
What equine or ox could race
With those magnificent trains, designed
To minimize time and space?
Over the prairie and over the stream,
Thro' commonwealths, on and on,
A roar, a flash, and a hiss of steam,
And the marvel of motion's gone.

Some bards write of music in the rush
Of a railway transit hall,
But they are mere disciples of gush,
Car-tunists in verse—that's all.

The joints of the Wabash track are smooth,
And hardly a sound is caught
From the whizzing wheels below to soothe
Such a bard's disjointed thought.

On the rails of the Wabash, far away,
Tho' a friend or a lover be,
Fond heart, know well that without delay
The coming one you may see.

The Wabash runs no Memnon Express,
To inspire young bards with rhyme,
But its "musical" rivals must confess
It's a daisy at "beating time."

★ ★ ★

ONE OF A FEW.

Away to Klondike I am not
A-going in the spring,
A cheerless, bleak and soul-less spot,
Where never bird may sing—
The journey seems too like a plot
Against a pigeon's wing.

Ah, me! that clime is lone and far,
The distance leagues with dread;
It seems as if the polar star
Must there be overhead,
And he who claims an arctic Lar
Is absent as the dead!

There may be gold in Klondike—yes,
Gold rich as dreams of greed,
And Fortune too may deign to bless
The hands that freeze or bleed;
But it is only half success,
Where love helps not succeed.

Starvation is no passing jest,
And heimweh is no fake,
And man may hug gold to his breast
Until his heart will break—
Our only islands of the blest
Are those at home we make.

Bonanza Creek can never show
A nugget large and fine,
Exposed to Arctic frost and snow,
Or buried in a mine,
Worth minutes which we all may know
Where genial home lights shine.
All Klondike can not boast a claim,
However rich it be,
Tho' for perferment and for fame
It holds a golden key,
Worth half the letters in the name
That's dearest unto me!
For Klondike I shall not depart
In spring time or in fall,
From troubled slumber oft to start,
While deeming loved ones call—
I have the fortune of the heart,
And that is best of all!

★ ★ ★

MAIL CLERKS.

Lonely, cramped, confined and busy,
Living strictly "on the run,"
Plagued with headache, worn and dizzy,
Mail clerks are not out for fun,
Steady nerves and keenest vision,
Mind that works and never tires,
They are types of such precision
As diplomacy requires.
Thro' the midnight shadows speeding,
Thro' the open light of day,
All but duty stern, unheeding,
On and on they go their way;
Handling papers that inform us
Of the scenes of peace and war,
Letters, too, that chill or warm us—
All the world they're working for.
Information quite commercial,
Missives friendship deigns to send,
Lore that's worthy of a Herschel,
Messages that love has penned;

Sentiment and business sordid,
Reason, logic, jest and rhyme,
They must marshal up rewarded,
For a fight with space and time.

Dauntless devotees of duty!
You are heroes, every one!
In your humdrum life there's beauty,
That of cheerless work well done.
For your skill and your endurance,
For the little praise you get,
Let me mail you this assurance—
All the world is in your debt.

★ ★ ★

DOOM.

The blithe young eagle took its flight,
Intrepid, fierce and proud;
It longed to bathe in brighter light
Above the sombre cloud.
A bullet sang—its wing fell weak—
It fluttered from the air:
Its breast it mangled with its beak,
And lowly perished there.

The trim young ash was marked afar,
For loveliness of form,
But o'er it swept the thunder's car,
In one terrific storm;
It was not rent—small outward sign
Told why it dropped each leaf,
But still we saw it slowly pine,
And seem to die of grief.

As fared that eagle, talent fares,
Full oft on passion's sea,
And many times bright beauty shares
The fate of that young tree.
It may be for a time they cheat
The vermin of the tomb,
But present death is far more sweet
Than their protracted doom!

“ANNIE.”

A country schoolhouse, small and old,
All dinginess within,
With tracings on the wall that told
Of many an urchin's sin.
Some artless leaden cartoon here
Hit off some rustic gawk,
And there some climax of the queer
Was hinted at in chalk.

A single glance the stranger taught
That there the hopeful youth,
In seasons gone for aye, had sought
Amusement more than truth.
A hand unskilled had traced a jest
To bring a seatmate shame,
Or some bold lad above the rest
Had scrawled his sweetheart's name.

In years ago there had been one,
Conspicuous in each scene,
A princess in the play-ground fun,
And in her class a queen.
Her bright eye had the midnight shade,
And flashed with innate pride;
She had ideals ere she laid
Her earliest dolls aside.

Her honor was without a stain,
Her judgment had no flaw;
“Queen Annie” had a local reign,
But there her will was law.

I lately spent an idle hour
Where this rare pupil shone,
And memory's devoted power
Could half restore her tone.

The intervening years had left
The footprints of decay;
Mutation's slow, unheeded theft
Had taken much away;
I scanned each unresponsive wall
For token of her fame,
And saw o'erhead, at last—'twas all—
In chalk her Christian name.

I thought of her, now lying low
Beneath the friendly sod,
Glad from accusing tongues to go
To an unerring God.
Her lot I paused to contemplate,
And almost viewed thro' tears
The bitter irony of fate,
The tragedy of years!

★ ★ ★

AFTER THE WAR.

Ah, I can realize to-day
This is a world of chance and change;
Here where I used to romp and play,
Things are so altered, cold, and strange!
Slow ruin saddens through the house,
Till one might fancy ghosts around;
I doubt if any hermit mouse
In all the structure could be found.
Old Edward—he was fond of me
Tho' I was but a neighbor's boy,
And often sat beneath that tree,
To watch our childish sport and joy.
That grand old tree, in trunk and bough,
Looks stately still and much the same;
Old Edward—is he only now
A fading memory and name?
That room where Harry used to sleep,
Or plan the morrow's fun instead—
Once from its window did we leap,
When we were sent too soon to bed.
Poor Harry! he went forth in gray,
My different mind made me his foe;
He died, perchance, some awful day—
My bullet may have laid him low!
Here where I stand grew Mary's flowers,
More kinds than I may try to name;
Perfection wrought by sunny hours,
But she could put them all to shame.
'Twas here we parted last—'twas here
We vowed our love could never die:
Oh, was it a prophetic tear
My weakness shed at that good-bye?

How bitterly I am bereft
 I try not to surmise to-day;
 They say she and old Edward left,
 Ere Harry had been long away.
 She now may be another's wife,
 Or o'er her grave the grass may grow;
 The war that saves the nation's life
 Leaves countless hopes and heroes low.

 I do not claim the war was wrong—
 Each sunburst somewhere throws a shade;
 But we must see so long—so long—
 The desolation it has made!
 In time the country will revive,
 And peace will smile on trade and art,
 But passing years can never drive
 The desolation from my heart!

* * *

HER RETROSPECT.

Why should the soul from transient trouble shrink?
 As summer pools seem coldest near the brink;
 As darkness thwarts the unaccustomed eye,
 That later hails the salient objects nigh—
 So troubles, bravely borne where'er we tread,
 Grow solemn comrades that dispel the dread.
 Proud man, who styles himself creation's lord,
 Whose self-esteem with God himself has warred,
 Sneers at the sister, walking at his side,
 With more devotion, tho' less vacant pride,
 Ah, he would find the task exceeding great
 To learn like her to suffer and to wait.
 Tho' woman may be ductile, meek and frail,
 She bears adversity where man would fail,
 And carries thro' vicissitudes of years
 Sad memories made sacred by their tears.
 The relict of the nation's early light
 That sank in darkness on Weehawken's height,
 Sat, late in life, one evening with the gay,
 To share their merriment and watch the play.
 Long years of wandering thro' the shades of woe
 Had sifted o'er her hair abundant snow,
 While wrinkles in her features told of pain,
 Tho' none had heard her murmur or complain.
 The young folks loved her, and when tired of play,
 They taxed her memories of a by-gone day—

A day significant o'er all the earth,
Conspicuous by a mighty nation's birth.
A soulful pathos kindled in her eye,
That inspiration freshest from the sky;
She paused a moment in rapt retrospect,
Then slowly spoke, but with a marked effect.
Far to the past her fancy winged, she smiled
To mention trials of a soldier's child;
It gave her conscious pleasure to describe
How she was honored by a tawny tribe,
And tho' a shrinking maid of shy fifteen,
By savage rite became a Western queen,
While Philip Schuyler, with his eagle eye,
Her famous father, stood indulgent by.
She dwelt in childhood's realm with forceful zest,
And history glowed in every thought expressed.
At length she passed to days of Seventy-six,
With all the charmer's art the mind to fix,
And touched on scenes the student's text reviews
From Lexington to Yorktown's glorious news.
She mentioned him whom Byron's muse confessed
The peerless "Cincinnatus of the West;"
She spoke of Greene, of Marion and Lee,
And other dauntless leaders of the free;
But never once she breathed the hallowed name
Of him who rose with Washington to fame,
In service in the field, and later bore—
A very Atlas in his skill and lore—
An infant nation to a sound finance,
Defying law's intrigue and lawless chance.
Not once she spoke of Hamilton, the man
Who had the will to do, the depth to plan,
Dear to his country, far more dear to her—
The genius murdered by the villain Burr!
She broadened with a statesman's cogent view,
To paint vicissitudes Columbia knew,
While yet the lion, lately smitten sore,
O'er the Atlantic sent his sullen roar;
With fervent praise of Jefferson and Jay,
And other pilots of her early way.
Yet still no word of him—her soul's desire—
The victim of ambition's hellish ire.

Her voice grew weaker, trembled, ceased at last,
 Her eyes were closed to summon all the past.
 The hearers sat in silence—even youth
 Had caught the sanctity of mournful truth,
 And hungered for the yet unspoken part
 All felt lay sobbing on that weary heart.
 The moments wore away—she did not stir—
 The present was as nothing then to her;
 What saw she in the past? Ah, who may say?
 Such gloom had fallen o'er her hapless way,
 She must have seen a record of despair
 Few heroes in the battle line could bear.
 Her son—a boy to make a mother vain—
 Upon the misnamed field of honor slain;
 Her daughter, fair and full of grace and soul,
 Demented by the news beyond control;
 And, last but heaviest stroke in all her doom,
 Her husband killed to give ambition room!
 These were not sorrows of a recent date,
 But to long years had added all their weight.
 She moved at last, her eyes unclosed, she sighed,
 But idle tears her native pride denied,
 She uttered in a sad, tremulous tone:
 "It is so long, so long! and I alone!
 The light of earth is mockery to me—
 'Tis Hamilton to-night I long to see!"
 She started, sadly smiled, and ceased to speak,
 The hearers left, each with a tear-damp cheek.

* * *

AN EPISTLE TO ANTIOCH.

Ye Christians of Antioch! listen the while
 A simple, brief legend is told,
 And whether you frown, now, or whether you smile,
 The writer begs you will not scold.
 Perchance 'twas the land of the Scotch lassie Jean,
 Or where Quixote was jeered in his day;
 Loyal only to fact, uncommitted to scene—
 'Twas where sheep and Beelzebub stray.
 A flock of rare promise, which fed on the hills
 All verdant and sunny and high,
 By dint of imagining numerous ills,
 Brought real adversity nigh.

Let not a good deacon or better divine
For fallacy pry here or peep—
If the spirit of evil could get into swine,
Why could it not get into sheep?

An instinct of selfishness thrived in the flock,
The herbage most tender each sought—
To gain it let others go nibble a rock—
What wonder they wrangled and fought?
Some leaders—my modesty dodges the name—
Beheld in their Shepherd a fault—
That is, tho' he treated the sheep all the same,
They fancied him partial with salt.

Sedition ere long to rebellion had grown,
And the cares of the good Shepherd grew;
Defiance and menace were heard in the tone
Of leader and wether and ewe.
One evening at last, in a free-for-all fight,
Decorum the leaders forsook;
They bumped the poor Shepherd into a sad plight,
Unmindful of shout and of crook.

Distraction came down on the flock, and they fled
In panic and darkness away,
And wolves, on the fugitives fattened and fed
For many and many a day.
The Shepherd endeavored to call the sheep back—
In sooth, he was gentler than I—
But the flock had been scattered so far by the pack,
It was folly and failure to try.

This legend, tho' simple, a moral affords,
From the dullest it is not concealed:
When Christians are fighting with pens or with
swords,
The Devil exults o'er the field.
Oh, Antioch! be not like that one of old,
Renowned for its strife in crusades,
But rather be famed for a Shepherd and fold,
Which no faction or folly invades!

*The above refers to a quarrel, now happily forgotten, which occurred at Antioch church a dozen years ago. Rev. Mr. Shepherd was then pastor.

“WHEN THE PHONYGRAF COMES OUT.”

When the Friday evenin' shadders
Take on colors like my ink,
And the stars climb up their ladders,
At the dull old world to wink,
Then you hear no feller swearin',
And you see no woman pout—
To the office all go tearin',
For the Phonygraf is out!

Well, I guess it's ruther pleasant
Readin' 'bout the folks you know,
Who is absent, who is present,
Who has come an' who will go.
Folks at supper leave untasted
Best of sausages an' crout;
Not a minute's to be wasted
When the Phonygraf comes out!

Items touchin' Smith and Cutler,
Notes of country folks between—
What's the Life of Ben F. Butler,
To the news of them you've seen?
Track is kept of Hombs an' Birney,
Ketrin', he's not hid in doubt,
Gad, it's readin' worth a journey,
When the Phonygraf comes out!

Lines from Baldock an' from Spencer—
Bargains which the eye engage—
Life itself is made immenser
By perusin' of its page.
Notice of Professor Penny,
Rambo's case of chills or gout;
There is news of all or any
When the Phonygraf comes out!

Latest facts from Gray an' Chatten's,
Wertz and Johnson nab their chance,
Hayses talk of silks and satins,
Hale hands in his song and dance;
Hounsom, Stewart, Dunbar, Stanley—
You can see what they're about,
If you're liberal and manly,
When the Phonygraf comes out!

May it have a Merry Christmas,
May its shadder git no less!
May it pass from trial's isthmus
To the mainland of success!
News it swipes from Butte to Bangor,
And (no other sheet to flout)
You can read an' not feel languor,
When the Phonygraf comes out!

★ ★ ★

ONWARD.

There is a triumph for the beaten,
For the fallen there is hope;
There are after-fruits to sweeten
All the fields wherein we cope,
O, my brother! cease despairing,
Let the dastard feebly sigh;
There are laurels worth the wearing,
You may win them if you try.

Effort is the key to doing,
Trial paves the way to power;
Let the ardor of pursuing
Charm away your darkest hour.
All defeat is born of blunder,
Blunders past supply us strength;
Lurid clouds we wander under,
Serve to clear the sky at length.

Live, my brother, for a purpose,
To it consecrate the mind;
If we let Despair usurp us,
We are traitors to our kind.
Catch the landscape's inspiration,
Doff the old to don the new;
Disappointment is probation,
Always helpful to the true.

There is pain in evolution,
There is trial in delay,
And distrust and persecution
Lie and wait upon the way;
But in goal is worth the winning,
Oh, my brother! this we know;
Wait not for a proud beginning,
Trust improving as you go.

FISHIN' 'LONG OLD ELLUM CRICK.

Gosh! the years go by a-buzzin',

Fit to make a feller pant!

Changes come on by the dozen,

In no time his youngest cousin

Is a uncle—or a aunt!

Somehow, allus, I get sad,

An' I feel that 'Time's too quick,

'Thinkin' of the fun I've had

Fishin' 'long old Ellum Crick!

Wish there wuz some use of wishin'—

I would wish to-night, egad!

I don't thanker for position,

But them days I went a-fishin'—

I am wantin' of 'em bad!

Never knowed a task or tool,

Only knowed the worms wuz slick;

Jist a happy, little fool,

Fishin' 'long old Ellum Crick!

Never had a thought of dinner

In them longest summer days;

Sunday found me out a sinner,

Suarin' crawfish, cat and minner

In a lot of artless ways.

Barefoot testin' mud an' thorn,

With my reg'lar chum, John Dick;

It was fun, suore as you're born,

Fishin' 'long old Ellum Crick!

Fish awhile, an' then go swimmin',

Idle as a vagrant's dream;

What cared we for wealth or women

'Then, when Fate jist seemed a-skimmin'

For us all the dairy cream?

No regard for Luke or Paul,

Strange that we escaped Old Nick,

Growin' ragged, rude an' tall,

Fishin' 'long old Ellum Crick!

"Like breeds like," the sage has stated,

And this fact my mem'ry ha'nts:

While around them holes we waited,

Idle, hungry, addle-pated,

Little holes come in our pants!
Good luck don't lay 'round in heaps,
Fortune smiles to hide a trick—
All of which I learned for keeps,
Fishin' 'long old Ellum Crick!

If we never thanked the donor,
As with fish we'd homeward plod,
'Twuz because we feared the owner
Might, to "whale" us unlike Jonah,
Spare each perch, but not the rod.
Secret givin' is the best,
Tried on people well or sick;
I have seen it put to test,
Fishin' 'long old Ellum Crick!

Names wuz full of contradiction—
In the "Bass hole" cats was found;
"Brown hole" was a clayey fiction,
An' the "Clear hole" meant conviction,
If the owner caught you round!
Names are frauds—I know a Ruth
With a heart as hard as brick—
But I thought the world was truth,
Fishin' 'long old Ellum Crick!

For old days to-night I'm wishin'—
Not for sake of hook and line—
Not to sprout a new ambition—
Not to claim a proud position—
But again to call 'em mine!
Sputters life's dull candle on,
Heedless of the short'nin' wick,
But them care-free days are gone—
Fishin' 'long old Ellum Crick!

★ ★ ★

I know not what the author got
For some books in my ken,
But justice would size up the lot
At three years in the pen.

A DIFFERENCE.

Vice walked forlornly down the street,
And shrank from all she chanced to meet;
A hell within her bosom burned,
And she was scorned where'er she turned.
An anguish shook her wasted frame,
To mark the sneers of maid and dame;
A torture rankled in her breast,
To hear the coarse and ribald jest.
Her spirit's stricken eagle tore
The heart that doomed it ne'er to soar!
Her conscience from a will perverse
Had grown a madness and a curse.
A sullen retrospection wrought
Its texture in each bitter thought.
There had she walked in girlhood's days,
Beset by flattery and praise,
With blameless cheeks whose modest blush,
Distracted the despairing brush,
And tresses o'er which scattered lay
A sunlight pure as gilds the day.
Where was the girl she once had been?
Dead—dead—oh, doubly dead in sin!
It was her phantom self came back,
To writhe upon remorse's rack,
Where she, a star, had erewhile shone,
Then paled and fled, an alien stone—
As doom directs the homicide
To seek the spot guilt cannot hide.
A favorite once—an outcast now—
Sin's burning mark was on her brow;
She long had wandered—God knows where—
Unnamed where once she knelt in prayer.
Long lost to home and Paradise,
That evening walked unhappy Vice.

Dame Prudence was out walking, too,
And marveled much the fright to view,
But ready recognition came,
To warn the cold and virtuous dame;
For she the wanderer had known,
When eager hands with-held the stone.

A flush suffused wan Vice's cheek—
She faltered—almost dared to speak;
But vainly did she hope to hear
A word of sympathy or cheer;
A moving statue passed her by
With heartless mien and distant eye,
“Contamination, I declare,”
Said she, “exhaled upon the air!”
The gossips noised it over town,
Which heightened much the dame's renown,
And while her fulsome praises showered,
None deemed she was a moral coward.
Dame Goodness, on the self-same street,
With Vice directly chanced to meet;
She knew her, and her greeting warm
New courage lent that shrinking form,
Dispelled the frost of wintry years,
And brought the glad relief of tears.
Dame Goodness poured kind word on word
Till poor Vice wondered as she heard;
Hope's shattered rays fell o'er her path
Like star beams thro' a tempest's wrath;
Soft penitence disturbed her breast,
And streaming eyes glad thanks expressed.
The gossips saw—the gossips said;
“Dame Goodness needs a stronger head;
Like Prudence could she learn to act,
Her manners far more might attract.”
When afterwards the dame was near,
They tried not to disguise a sneer.

Now, men and angels differ far
As differ vulgar clod and star,
And sacrilege to some it seems,
To wonder what an angel deems;
But while I will not chance a guess,
Why speculation quite suppress?
Did the Recording Angel think
For Goodness he was wasting ink—
Or did he deem that Prudence lost
An item entered to her cost?

SLAIN.

Hope of his mother,
Stay of his wife,
Only another
Gone darkly from life—
Slain, slain, as a brother
Might slay with a knife!
Near the glad yule-tide
Borne silent away,
Over the cool tide
Which frees soul from clay;
Loosed from all passion,
Commotion of breath,
Cold in the ashen
Composure of death.

Three score and a half—
Not so summed his years;
Infirmity's staff
Made way not for fears;
No! he died in his prime,
Sank from usefulness down—
Died—his debtor was time
And his meed was renown;
But he died—and a crime
Is condoned in the town!

What of eloquence now,
Or professional skill?
Why should genius endow,
If the gift destroys will?
Ah, read on that brow
Of the worm of the still—
How it breaks every vow,
In its frenzy to kill!

The weakest are strong,
The strongest are weak,
While gold gilds the wrong
That wastes heart and cheek.
Honor withers to naught,
Talent is but a name;
Souls are bartered and bought—
And Law winks at the shame!

Tears, son and daughter!
Tears may not avail,
Till license of slaughter
Shall falter and fail!
Hearts, mother and sire!
Hearts vainly must bleed;
Blood quells not the fire
Law kindles with greed!
Condemn not the vender,
His motive is pelf—
Law, as evil's defender,
Is the evil itself.
Such dense moral blindness
Glooms in Mammon's foul breath,
Men deem it a kindness
To traffic in death!
Oh, mothers, who cherish
Fond babes at the breast,
The brightest must perish—
Law spares you the rest!
Hope of his mother,
Stay of his wife,
Only another
Gone darkly from life.
Shed no tears vainly—
Thousands ere this have cried;
Tell the truth plainly—
Truth shame best may hide.
He erred all insanely,
And, erring, he died.
No eulogy graphic,
No fancy sketch draw;
He died of a traffic—
One fostered by law!
Peace settle o'er him,
Soft rest his clay—
Ah, could they restore him
Who slew him for pay!
Will they tremble before him,
On the great judgment day?

AFFINITY.

They loved as few can love—they knew
The unity whose sum is two;
Their love, as deep as feeling's tide,
The ruthless hand of death defied;
Yea, even tore the veil away,
That parts the spirit from the clay.
Their love had grown from childhood—time
But made its pathos more sublime;
As boy and girl they oft had played
Together in the linden's shade;
As man and woman they had known
The brooklet's note and breeze's tone;
And Nature spoke to them the same,
No matter whence the echo came.
Like rays from different orbs that ebb,
Blent in one sheeny starlight web,
Like mists from sundered peaks that rise,
Wreathed in one gewgaw of the skies,
So things of earth, in part or whole,
Appealed to them, a single soul.
He strong and dark, she frail and fair—
Love's law is written, who knows where?
Short was their time of wedded bliss:
Can other worlds be sad as this?
Ev'n while the nuptial vows were said,
Consumption's flush her cheek o'erspread;
They realized the worst must come,
And oft deplored it, oft were dumb.
One eve she said to him: "My own,
I will not leave you all alone,
But from the happier spirit sphere
I will return to watch you here
Not long bereft you will abide,
But soon will come to join your bride;
And mine will meet your coming soul,
And guide with kisses to its goal;
Weak, weak and vain are bonds of clay
Such parted love as ours to stay!
When all is ready, and we wait
For you beyond the viewless gate;

Then back to earth I will repair,
And play again your favorite air—
My own, the summons you will heed,
And your white soul will come with speed?"

One eve, when all was bright with May,
Her spirit passed in peace away;
He lived as one who may not see
The leaf or bloom upon the tree.
He walked as one who never heard
The amorous piping of the bird.
His step grew slow, his eye grew dim,
The world was cold and drear to him;
His other dearer self had fled—
In all but dying, he was dead.
He shunned his kindred and his kind,
And let no converse free his mind,
Tho' often as he walked alone,
He poured his thoughts in monotone.
June came and went—in mid-July
He grimly went to bed to die;
Remonstrance, pleading, all in vain—
His life was his, and it was pain.
He lay within the stately room,
Whence music, like a rich perfume,
Beneath her touch so angel-rare,
Had poured to consecrate the air.
The grand piano held his gaze
Thro' sleepless nights and weary days.
One evening tranquil, cool and clear,
He said to those who watched anear:
"Not now, not now am I alone—
Within the room I feel my own!"
Ev'n as the words he faintly spoke,
A flood of music o'er them broke;
No mortal fingers swept the keys,
And such ne'er wake such chords as these—
They shimmered from a viewless hand,
In harmony all wildly grand.
He flung him to the floor, and cried:
"I come, my own, I come, my bride!"
He strove to reach the instrument,
But swayed and tottered as he went,
And as he sank upon the floor,
He murmured; "we shall part no more."
A smile upon his visage spread,
The music ceased, and he was dead.

“BLACK CRISMUS.”

Old “Aunt Susie” was no kin
To us—folks jes called her so;
Pleased us kids when she come in,
Made us sad to see her go.
Signs she knowed from A to Z,
Signs from breakfast clean to bed,
An’ it allus puzzled me
How she kep’ ’em in her head.

I’d pick up her ball of yarn,
Or I’d light her old clay pipe—
Suore as shingles on the barn,
Then some sign she’d shake down ripe.
Fiery sunsets, cricket cheeps,
Something in the dishrag’s looks—
These things meant to her, for keeps,
Wisdom in an’ out of books.

I remember Crismus Eve,
Jes about two year ago,
When “Aunt Susie” seemed to grieve
’Cause the ground wa’n’t white with snow.
“This black Crismus” she declared,
While her hair looked white as wool,
“Finds the big world unprepared,
An’ means graveyards will be full!”

Words ’at moistened up my eye,
Kep’ me ’wake till nearly day—
What if Tom, my cat, should die,
An’ I’d have to lose old Tray?
Maybe Crismus wa’n’t to blame—
Might a-been in spite of snow—
But soon Tom died, trapper’s game,
An’ some pizen laid Tray low.

Old “Aunt Susie” slumbers well
On the hillside with the dead,
An’ I’ve heard some smart folks tell
Signs was nonsense in her head,
But they somehow seem to streak
All my thoughts the whole day long—
An’ where signs has made me weak
I know big folks ’at ain’t strong!

ODE TO THE LICK SPRING.

And thou hast failed, primeval well,
 Meek oracle of water,
Whose low prophetic murmurs fell,
 Ere Troy heard Priam's daughter!
Before the pyramids were built,
Before Greek glory waned in guilt;
Before the Star of Bethlehem
Was hailed the matchless stellar gem;
Before the weary Wandering Jew
The first steps of his journeys knew—
Thy blessings poured as clear as dew.
Thy waters, in their sparkling romp,
 Outlived, in solitude,
Egyptian lore and Roman pomp,
 In history reviewed;
Aye, they went on while sinking thrones
Lay heavy over skull and bones.
Fine type of usefulness and age,
Strange thou has no historic page!
Ah, me! tho' modesty has charms,
 In these degenerate days,
I notice that the eager arms
 Are those that grasp the praise,
And fame sets but a single task—
Cry long and loud whene'er you ask.
The Indians and the buffalo,
 Before the pioneer,
Were glad thy limpid depths to know,
And from their calm continual flow
 Drank health the livelong year.
The former in the grateful shade
 Of stately elms around,
Love to his dusky sweetheart made,
And in his artless way displayed
The sentiments not oft arrayed
 In eloquence profound;
The latter came and went his way,
The mammal monarch of his day,
 Unfrightened and unchased,

Save when the clumsy arrow sped,
That squaw and pappoose might be fed—
As yet he had not learned to dread

The white man's wanton waste.
When hardy followers of Boone
Came—tardy—on the scene,
In January or in June,

They knew thy worth, I ween;
And in the days of early ease,

When corn was current money,
And fortunes grew as in the trees
Were found the mines of honey,

Such radius thy honor knew,
It reached the county almost through,
And pilgrim barrels to thee drew
From ev'n beyond Tippecanoe.
How oft are Nature's gifts abused,
And opportunities misused!

We knew thee merely as a thing—
In time of drouth a handy spring,
Because Necessity, the dame

That nurses young invention,
With steady immigration came,
And called to wells attention—
Well water still may make us sick,
And we are out the time and brick,
But at this late day don't propose
Surrendering when germs are foes.
Still some celebrity was thine,

And hundreds knew "the Lick"
Had struck it rich in water fine,
Without the wizard's stick.

A creature of black, miry earth,
Thou didst add to some acres' worth,

In fierce solstitial fury,
But in the time of rain and flood,
Thy broad expanse of slimy mud
Would not have feed a jury.

We deemed not that a knight of old,
Alone in desert waste,
Would have relinquished piles of gold,
From thee to get a taste.
Preach on, preach on, ye wise of earth—
I say environment makes worth!

But, emblem of unwearying Time,
And witness of his years,
Naught is so ponderous or sublime,
Beneath the astral spheres,
That it can keep its vernal youth,
And still resist decay's dull tooth.
The way of all the world was thine,
To sink beneath the sod;
Short, short, is the immortal line,
Since Enoch walked with God;
Yet thou wilt come again, perhaps,
As seasons change and roll,
Thy parts united by thy lapse
Into a greater whole,
As failure often brings to man
The better purpose, skill and plan.
Impressive in thy true humility,
And constant in thy great utility,
I would have had thee still flow on—
I somehow feel a friend is gone.
If I have waited rather long
In rhyme to praise thy merit—
The living rarely claim a song,
It is the way—or right or wrong—
We take up our inherit.

★ ★ ★

FAITH.

A zephyr, like some peri, strayed,
Self-exiled, from the summer's shore,
And in October's shine and shade
It knew its olden warmth once more;
Light was its touch, its kiss was rare,
It dallied e'er an eastern slope,
And soon a rose poured on the air
Its fragrant eloquence of hope.
When thought was but consuming flame,
And doubt set horrors round the goal,
A derelict contentment came,
Like starlight, to its parent soul;
Soft was its thrill, but it was rife
With fervor alien to the dust,
And once again a struggling life
Had learned the secret plan to trust.

IDEAL HEARTS.

Did you tell me that life was a failure,
That love was a bubble, a boast;
That the spray on the wine iridescent
Was only a vapor at most?
Why, darling, the best of God's blessings
Is rayed in some opaline gleam;
Let us catch from the 'lusive colors
The flash of our beautiful dream;
Let us filch from the lights and the shadows
The ray of a sentient beam.

Did you tell me, my love, that in spring-time
The blossoms are flecked with the light?
That in summer a luscious, hot splendor
Glowes out from their passionate sight;
That in autumn their petals are haggard—
Their veins are congealed by the frost,
And the silver flecked blossoms of spring-time
Lie pallid and soulless and lost,
And the wine and the light of a lifetime
Is into eternity tossed?

My darling, the blossoms, the flowers,
Are rapturous breaths from the bowl,
And the nectarous perfume entrancing
Wings ecstasy deep to the soul;
Your heart in its seasons of blessing,
Its dreaming, its glowing, its rest,
Make life not a phantom, a fiction,
Make love not a bubble at best,
And you the one flash that I'd scale for
The walls of the home of the blest.

★ ★ ★

AT TWILIGHT.

While resurrection clothes each tree,
And life's great plan anew grows vast,
My old lost self returns to me,
From some Atlantis of the past.
The scented plum-bloom's mimic snow,
The lilac by the breeze caressed,
Wake in my heart a passing glow,
That beacons back this transient guest.

Calm Venus, blazing in the west,
And Sirius, twinkling more remote,
As in my youth, once more suggest
Far more than sage or bard e'er wrote—
Far more of hope—far less of pain—
Than clings to musings wed to clay—
An opulence of high disdain,
Which soars from lowly cares away.

Once more I seem at Nature's feast,
Where love is fond and life is high,
While Notus, like a Druid priest,
Sheds blessings as he passes by.
Again I hear a whip-poor-will,
That sober prophet sad as truth,
And thro' my pulses runs a thrill,
A glowing memory of youth.

Oh, thou who lent my heart its spring—
Its latest, and perchance its last—
Fares now thy soul on dædal wing
Back o'er our sad, regretful past?
How much of bale, how much of bliss,
Estrangement spared us, none can tell;
But sometimes in an hour like this
Our hearts may know the olden spell.

★ ★ ★

A LOST FRIEND.

The old clock stopped, and Silence spoke
In tones so loud and stern,
My dreaming fancies passed like smoke,
And sleep would not return.

'Tis strange what trifles mean in life,
When weighed at feeling's mart;
All things along our path are rife
With charms to move the heart.

The old clock that for thirty years
Had told the passing hour,
True still, in time of smiles or tears,
Had lost its vigil power.

Its hands, that seemed so ever-wise
Through all the varied past,
In mechanism's serene demise,
Were motionless at last.

Its face, that smiled upon delight
And saddened with distress,
Henceforth in dull and ghostly white
An absence would express.

It stopped short in that deadlong time
When life seems far away;
I woke as if in some vague clime
Unwashed by wave of day.

The silence pulsed an epitaph
No language can translate;
I almost deemed Time's telegraph
Was mute with pending fate.

A shoreless desert round me spread,
A waste of nameless hours,
Where mystic presence of the dead
Proved all its haunting powers.

Such sorrow on my spirit grew,
To lose that steadfast friend,
I thanked the chanticler that crew
The long night to an end.

★ ★ ★

SPRING IN MISSOURI.

The bloom is on the peach tree,
The cherry and the crab,
The hens are on the cackle,
And gossips on the gab.
The cows are in the pasture,
And the hogs are in the lot;
The cabbage plants are growing
And the greens are in the pot.
The orchards are a-bloomin',
The currant and the rose
Are sheddin' sweet aroma
On every breeze that blows;
The maidens are a-blushin'
And the grass is gettin' green,
The lambs of February
Are big enough to wean.
O, it's nice to be a poet
And tune your harp and sing
Of Bonny Old Missouri
When it's just a comin' spring.

TO A. J. EIDSON, M. D.

Well, Doc! since time hangs heavily tonight
Upon my spirit, like a wintry gloom,
And since my mind is hardly in a plight
To give old Blackstone's solemn precepts room,
Some lines (indifferent perhaps) I write,
Which you may read—or let the fire consume.
My mind's disquiet must sustain the blame,
If you should censure—I write not for fame.

I like this sturdy, stately, staid old stanza;
(Alliteration you will please excuse);
Adapted to the epic or romanza,
It is a measure great or small can use;
Lord Byron found in it a huge bonanza,
And worked it with indomitable muse:
Tho' he degraded it in his "Don Juan"—
That naughty tale of moral wreck and ruin.

I have "an incubus"—I quote the term
From various novels most unwisely read;
I wonder, does each literary worm
Feed on the leaves where other worms have fed?
Say, is it true, as critics bold affirm,
All merit's measure was in Shakespeare's head?
But why the fact in such digression lose?
I have "an incubus"—'tis called THE BLUES.

In self-dissatisfaction is a hell—
Or sheol, if you like the word revised;
And what avails the hunger to excel,
When in the heart each effort is despised?
They tell me I am like Ed. Langham*—well!
What woes in such resemblance are comprised?
He who could lay Ed. Langham's bosom bare,
Might sing like Dante of the sheol there!

I am mercurial—which means I feel
Sensations graded wide each way from zero;
The South wind fills me with a Christian zeal,
The North wind brings malevolence of Nero—
From metaphor to truth I here appeal,
And state I am not quite a moral hero
When something in my blood or my digestion
Puts pious sentiments out of the question.

I hate hyperbole, and do not mean
 To let my lines grow either flat or florid:
 Well, then, sometimes when nature is serene,
 Like friendly elves, the zephyrs kiss my fore-
 head;
 And yet sometimes upon the self-same scene,
 My feelings and my thoughts are simply horrid;
 And, in sad sooth, I can not tell you whether
 The fault is in my heart or in the weather.
 Life is a mystery to me, I own,
 A chaos of heredity and habit;
 A hunting ground set off with thorn and stone,
 Man is the hound, and passion is the rabbit;
 Tho' Tennyson might o'er this figure groan,
 It has a moral—any mind can grab it.
 A preacher might condemn this verbal picture
 But truth, you know, is rarely hurt by stricture.
 Where am I drifting? Not to panegyric—
 My muse is not of flattery a mint;
 And I despise the timid little lyric,
 That gives the world a falsely rosy tint;
 And here, in passing, as a meek empiric,
 I drop the Women's C. T. U. a hint:
 Let them think less of perfect legislation,
 And study more the science of gestation.
 Heredity may serve as ruin's nurse,
 And destiny may mark us in our morning,
 To bless us, or pronounce a blighting curse
 That makes us grieve we did not "die a-borning,"
 While rapidly bad deeds run on to worse,
 In spite of conscience or the Bible's warning:
 Accept this fact distasteful to the bigot—
 From truth's deep mine 'tis daring now to dig it.
 If each effect betrayed its secret cause,
 If every vice were hunted home to why,
 Then equity might sanction all our laws,
 And innocence might not protesting die;
 Then bigotry might point out moral flaws,
 With an unerring, if an eager eye—
 But, pshaw! I only stultify my rhyme,
 For ignorance will blink at dying time.

Misanthropy is not a fault of mine;
 Against the world I've little to complain:
 With steadier purpose, loftier design,
 Perchance my efforts might be less in vain.
 By Jove! vice is a most luxuriant vine,
 And never fails to bear the fruit of pain—
 Man's neighbors love to note its growth amazing,
 Because—dispraise is lighter work than praising!
 Old Time came to me in a dream last night,
 When nothing save the clock disturbed the quiet,
 And whispered, "Son, your hair will soon be
 white
 Unless you quit your recklessness and riot;
 And if you would regain your lost delight,
 I recommend a change of habit— try it!"
 As Chronos went upon some other mission,
 I vowed to profit by his admonition.
 Oh, Eros! if your sun for me has set,
 I hold you are indeed a god contrary:
 Is all the fondness now a bright regret,
 I used to feel for Susan, Kate and Mary?
 Or may I hope some blonde or bright brunette
 My heart-beats once again may thrill and vary?
 Methinks love's beacon, glimmering thro' the dark,
 Might make me stretch new sail above my bark.
 And so you mean to publish, Doc! I'm pleased—
 I'm highly pleased indeed—to learn the same;
 Hands less deserving have the laurel seized,
 And borne it proudly up the heights of fame:
 My own obscurity would be appeased,
 To note the luster of your worthy name.
 Doc—as in physic—be in verse a leader,
 And please a neighbor and admiring reader!

*A character in "Robert Elsmere."



Oh, teamster of the long ago,
 Whose whip-lash played a tune,
 This season why are most June haws
 Inclined to be jejeune?

NOVICE AND MASTER.

While in high monologue he praised,
The novice on his painting gazed.
"It is perfection of its kind,
A crowned conception of the mind;
A triumph, eulogizing art;
Refinement speaking to the heart."
Narcissus in his fabled day,
Not more of folly could display
Than this poor novice, sorely vain,
Whose wretched daub upset his brain.
Full of the one all potent thought,
'Twas I conceived—'Twas I who thought,
He changed his attitude to gaze,
And poured in pompous tones his praise.
"I doubt if Reynolds or Dore
Achieved such blending in his day;
I doubt if any master known
Would blush to call this work his own.
I know they praise it not—but why?
Ah, envy scoffs at merit's sigh,
While jealousy will coldly stare
And sentence talent to despair.
I thrill to feel, when I am dust
Men's verdict will be bold and just;
I thrill to know this work of mine
Will yet be famous as divine."
Poor fool! Thus vainly to aspire
Is from the stars to borrow fire,
And scorch the heart and sear the clay
With each misplaced, forbidden ray.
The master by the statue stood,
Which breathed—if marble ever could;
The praise of thousands in his ear
Provoked a smile that hid a sneer.
"Ah, such expression!" cried the crowd,
"This—this—is silence speaking loud;
Those lips retain the eloquence
Which shed its glamour o'er the sense;
The very presence is restored—
'Tis he returned, whom we adored!"

"Weak critics!" thought the master then,
 "Art is no common trait with men;
 Art is a sophistry, enshrined
 Within the isolated mind,
 Which tortures to supreme despair
 Those who escape from grosser care.
 The work is vulgar which they praise,
 'Tis dullness prompts their lingering gaze;
 It cannot move, it cannot speak,
 No animation warms its cheek,
 'Tis failure posing as success—
 I trust man more, admire him less.
 From adulation let me fly—
 I see not with the public eye."
 Weak man! To thirst for stellar stream,
 And waking wait for seraph's dream,
 Is madness—Yea, the madness known
 By those who think and toil alone,
 And in achievements only find
 Where imperfection mocks at mind—
 Where real and ideal part,
 And hope grows wormwood to the heart.
 Fate is perverse with each and all;
 We humbly rise or proudly fall;
 So wags the world, and so it will—
 The human must be human still!

* * *

RHYME OF THE SEASON.

Drouth of 1901.

I saw a shadow of old Jove
 Come over hill and glen,
 And parching plain and panting grove
 Knew thunder's thrill again.

Uncertainty lay in the air,
 Doubt's legend marked the sky,
 So oft had promise full as fair
 In rainless haze gone by.

The fateful conflict raged between
 Gulf current and the drouth,
 Till suddenly came on the scene
 The gray belt from the south.

The good Samaritan of mist
 Its lavish bounty poured,
 As when the charities enlist
 The sated magnate's hoard.
 Tho' generous, the shower was brief
 And narrow in its scope,
 Yet left on every spray and leaf
 The sparkling pledge of hope.
 'Twas like a star when all the earth
 Is drowned in midnight gloom:
 An earnest of a new day's birth
 With dewy bud and bloom.
 The volant blessing passed away,
 But left its spell behind;
 A softness in the solar ray,
 And good cheer o'er the mind.
 Where late a blighting sneer had lain
 Was now a breezy smile;
 A benediction stretched o'er plain
 And vale for many a mile.
 There was a play of squirrels among
 The freshened, whispering trees,
 A carol of the birds, unsung
 While heat had been disease.
 This lesson to myself I own,
 Whate'er the season gives;
 Omnipotence is on the throne,
 And the Eternal lives.

★ ★ ◆

A GENTLE SPRING TORTURE.

Addressed to A. J. Eldson, M. D.

Well, Doctor:—Will you spare the time
 To read a sample of my rhyme—
 Rhyme of a homely, honest kind,
 A fair reflection of my mind:
 No Norman Pegasus I claim,
 On which I hope to ride to fame,
 And no Parnassus of the Greeks
 I deem the hills along our creeks.

By nature I have not the gift
To sing like "laverock in the lift;"
I lack that harmony of thought,
That concord from the angels caught,
Which reconciles all discords, till
Each sentiment becomes a thrill;
But while without that fire divine,
Which like the star of eve may shine,
My modest muse emits a ray
That sometimes drives my gloom away.

My plow has stood at rest to-day,
Because the rains enforced delay,
But stern necessity denied
Me that sweet rest for which I sighed,
So fearing Laziness' attacks,
I swung the keen, resounding axe.
The farmer—Doctor, do you know
The farmer hoes an endless row?
From June till May, the year around,
Uncompromising tasks are found;
Before him work a Hydra stands,
With heads too numerous for his hands,
And fervent would he bless that sun,
Which, setting, left no job undone,
With weeds and insects, flood and drouth,
To waste his fields and rob his mouth;
While labor and grim care conspire
To make of him a wreck entire,
The tortures he is doomed to feel
Of old Ixion's fabled wheel.
Some leisure I would like—but stop!
"An idle brain's the Devil's shop;"
'Twixt work and meanness—say no more,
I'll pour the sweat at every pore!

The balsam shed by generous showers
Revives the drooping buds and flowers,
That soon will Edenize the way
Across the landscape trod by May,
And bids sweet Nature everywhere
Breathe benedictions on the air,
Of all to whom the rain has brought
A rosy hope or pleasant thought,

How many feel what grace imparts—
The gratitude of humble hearts?
We mortals are a thankless lot,
Still craving that which we have not,
And as rich blessings on us pour,
More loud our clamor grows for more.
But, hang it! I did not set out
To preach, or pray, or even shout,
And since my house is mostly glass,
My neighbors' follies all may pass.

Why, Doctor, dip your pen no more
In Helicon, as oft of yore?
Have you by amputation neat
Dismembered your poetic feet?
Or leisure with the lyric muse
Does Æsculapius refuse?
It seems in using drug and pill,
You quite forget diviner skill,
And while you make the body whole,
Neglect the charms that soothe the soul.
You I pronounce a poet born,
And gifted letters to adorn,
Whose pen might trace a shining name
Upon the fadeless scroll of Fame.
Ah, were my spirit tuned to play
The music of a raptured lay,
Not need nor duty should prevent
My using powers by nature lent.

'Twixt therapeutics and the muse,
For fame the latter I would choose,
But when it comes to cash—well, there
The doctor gets the lion's share.
The poet's fame, when I am well,
I fancy nothing can excel,
But when I'm sick, the doctor seems
The apex of ambitious dreams!
So vacillates my judgment—so,
In truth, I guess at half I know.
A sudden thought comes to me here,
Which glorifies the doctor's sphere:
The Sage of Monticello said
That morals flee when health has fled;

When pills or quinine, then, are given,
We're helped upon our road to Heaven!
Of bliss the poets sing and deem
Beyond old Charon's awful stream;
The doctors keep us in good shape
To cross when there is no escape.
Long live the doctors then—and long
Let tuneful souls pour out their song—
And may the name of Eidson still
Be sacred to both verse and pill!
But, Doctor, now my patience flags,
So I subscribe myself, P. Scaggs.

★ ★ ★

PUT HIM OUT.

Uncle Samuel, when you scrap,
Anywhere, with any chap,
Put him out;
Be your foeman low or tall,
If you have to fight at all,
Swing your dukes out like a maul,
Put him out.

Aguinaldo's in the ring,
Wants to be a Tagal king,
Put him out;
Make him groggy, Uncle Sam,
Try a solar plexus jam,
Touch his jaw up with a slam,
Put him out.

Billy Bryan, from the Platte,
On false issues waxes fat,
Put him out;
Stand him off and serve him right,
Show him he is not in plight
For a square out finish fight,
Put him out.

Billy Mason or George Hoar—
I could mention many more—
Put him out;
Paralyze his captious jaw,
Teach him right in reason's law,
Fill each copperhead with awe,
Put him out.

AN EXPERIENCE.

I was a puny kid,
 'At somehow didn't grow,
Nor have to do as I was bid,
 Nor swing the weedin' hoe.
The doctor named my ail
 The most confusin' terms,
But gran'pap said he'd "bet a bale
 Of cotton, it was worms."
Ah, me! the weary days
 In boyhood that I knowed;
I couldn't join in sports or plays,
 Because I never growed.
Aunt Katy would prescribe
 A scorchin' ginger stew,
Aunt Em condemed the doctor tribe,
 For pennyrile an' rue.
When I was ten, in fact,
 I wasn't half a boy,
Like some of six I couldn't act,
 An' sow distress and joy.
I had no bloomin' cheek,
 No dimpled chin, alack!
It took me half a sunny week
 To get my shadder black!
The doctors gave me stuff
 With lockjaw in its names;
Of Latin I have took enough
 To give me college claims.
Old Doctor Green at last,
 He says to pap, says he:
"I'll salivate them symptoms fast"—
 He salivated me!
In nothin' I found fun,
 An' nothin' I could do,
But pine a lot for No. One,
 An' grunt enough for two.
I heard old Tray at night
 A howlin' at the moon,
An' told myself in chronic fright
 It meant my summons soon.

Pap got a yearlin' mule,
The sort no feller steals,
An' told me only some kid fool
Would monkey at his heels.
I monkeyed though—I thought
It was an easy way
To turn that old disease to naught,
An' sleep low in the clay.

I never knowed jes' where
Its hind feet struck, kerslam!
But there seemed need of most repair
About my diaphragm.
The people said, "He'll die,
Moskeeters kill such folks,"
An pap he 'lowed he wouldn't try
No doctor's whims or hoax.

I fooled 'em all, got well,
An' plumped out big an' fat,
An' in a year, I'm here to tell,
I'd licked each rival brat.
Let M. D.'s know, that mule
By kickin' fixed a bone;
He kicked because he was a fool,
An' thus let truth be known!

★ ★ ★

WHEN SHELTON GOES AWAY.

Proud Macon, named for him, I guess,
Whose power shook lands and seas,
And justly famed for Richmond, Hess,
And Frederick William Blee;
We owe you not an idle grudge,
Nor give vain cholera sway,
Tho' you will claim our honored Judge,
When Shelton goes away.

To us decision was not left,
It was no jury case;
Deep in our hearts we feel bereft,
And sorrow wraps the place.
Contempt of court is sore when tried,
The mandate we obey,
And all remonstrance we must hide,
When Shelton goes away.

No habeas corpus need be shown,
There can be no appeal,
His Honor tried the case alone,
However we may feel.
That worth is great that calls for tears,
When neighbors will not stay;
We lose much that inspires and cheers,
When Shelton goes away.
We lose a citizen who stood
For honor, truth and right,
Whose "I will" measured as "I should,"
Whose leadership was light.
Be, Macon! be to him as we
Have been for many a day;
Oh saddened faces we shall see,
When Shelton goes away!

*Written upon the removal from Lancaster, Mo., of Hon. Nat. M. Shelton, Circuit Judge.



THE HARDY PIONEER.

There's praise for soldier and marine,
There's praise for painter and for bard,
And glory marks each earthly scene,
Where men have fought or striven hard.
Let others sing of battle's rage,
Or honor so the statesman seer,
I look on history's humbler page,
And sing the hardy pioneer.
This Moses of the wilderness,
This Cortez of the prairie wild,
What recks he though cares round him press,
Or thorns around his path be piled?
He stops not for eternal woods,
Where only wolves and thunder speak;
His wagon holds his earthly goods,
Six days of toil make up his week.
He stands a monarch in his right,
And faces problems statesmen shun,
And fears no foes by day or night,
Protected by his plow and gun;

By that from want, by this from beast,
His virtues growing with his toil,
He earns and eats his modest feast,
His independence in his soil.

Some forty miles to mill or store
He counts no hardship of his lot,
And adding still, to something, more,
He thanks the Lord for all he's got.
Civilization's sturdy knight,
He smiles at peril, laughs at fear,
And when most darkness shuts out light,
He tells himself the dawn is near.

He is a hero, and his wife,
His faithful helpmate, is a queen,
As valorous in her busy life
As was Zenobia, I ween.
These worthy two build home and state,
And plant the wilds in golden corn,
And bear the buffetings of fate,
In aid of millions yet unborn.

Let Kipling sing the songs of war,
Be mine the calmer theme of peace—
The Roman grandeur I abhor,
And choose the glory of old Greece.
Proud souls, upon this fitting day,
Join we in one tremendous cheer,
For him who paved great Schuyler's way,
The dauntless, hardy pioneer!

*Read at Old Settler's Reunion in Lancaster, Sept. 22, 1902.

* * *

OLE UNCLE SAM.

You had some trouble in yo' house,
Ole Uncle Sam,
De Norf an' Souf played cat an' mouse,
Ole Uncle Sam;
De evil sperits kotch de Souf,
De Norf stuck up an ugly mouf,
An' boaf spilt blood to break a drouf,
Ole Uncle Sam.

Us cullud pussons wuz de bone,
Ole Uncle Sam,
Lawd! we had trouble ob our own,
Ole Uncle Sam.
De sixties dey wuz obercast,
I thought each year de black man's last,
My! but our wool turned cotton fast,
Ole Uncle Sam.

De Norf and Souf was sistahs bohn,
Ole Uncle Sam,
An' one liked cotton, t'odder cohn,
Ole Uncle Sam;
When faces dey begin to make,
It give deir pa a bad headache,
John Bull he say, "Sam gwineter break,"
Ole Uncle Sam.

De war cloud hit wuz awful black,
Ole Uncle Sam,
As dahk as Ephram's sunburnt back,
Ole Uncle Sam.
Dey grabbed de gun an' drapped de flout,
Dey raised the smoke an' battle shout,
Dey fought it squar' an' fought it out,
Ole Uncle Sam.

Deir neighbors libin' ober sea,
Ole Uncle Sam,
Said, "Two sich Dinahs kaint agree,
Ole Uncle Sam;
De tater-masher gwine come in
An' aggervate de rollin' pin,
Dey'll smite each odder nose an' chin,
Ole Uncle Sam."

But, shucks! dey didn't half know beans,
Ole Uncle Sam,
An' kaint tell garlic yit from greens,
Ole Uncle Sam.
Now Yurup see de gun-bar'l shine
A piece of plow steel monst'us fine,
De sword a razzer keen as mine,
Ole Uncle Sam.

Ole Spain she tell us, "Knock dat chip,
Ole Uncle Sam,
Dat's on my hat—Ise sunk yo' ship,
Ole Uncle Sam,
We knock de chip, an' knock de hat,
An' leave Spain guessin' whar she at—
She feel jes like a done spanked brat,
Ole Uncle Sam.

De Norf an' Souf forgot to pout,
Ole Uncle Sam,
"Remembah kinfohks!" is dier shout,
Ole Uncle Sam;
An' dey is made up now for sho',
Hair-pullin's gwine to come no mo'—
Huh! ort to been so long befo',
Ole Uncle Sam.

De war cloud roun' Manila fades,
Ole Uncle Sam,
Ole Glory's rainbow hit pervades,
Ole Uncle Sam,
An' me an' you boaf han' in han',
Will tote our burdens an' expan',
Till progress bless de darkest lan',
Ole Uncle Sam.

* * *

THE LITTLE COUNTRY PAPER.

It's just a little paper—it isn't up to date;
It hasn't any supplement or colored fashion plate.
It comes out every Thursday, unless the forms are
pied;
The outside is home-printed, with the boiler-plate
inside.
It hasn't any cable direct from old Bombay,
But it says that 'Colonel Braggins is our midst today;'
It doesn't seem to worry about affairs of state,
But it tells that 'Joseph Hawkins has painted his
front gate;'
It never mentions Kruger or Joseph Chamberlain,
But says that 'Thompson's grocery has a new win-
dow pane;'

And that 'the Mission Workers will give a festival,
And there'll be a temperance lecture in Wm.
Hooper's hall.'

It tells about the measles that Jimmy Hawkins had,
And says that 'Israel Johnson has become a happy
dad.'

It says that 'cider-making is shortly to commence,'
And cites the fact that Ira Todd is building a new
fence.

It mentions Dewey's coming in one brief paragraph,
And says that 'Charlie Trimble had sold a yearling
calf.'

And everything that happens within the little town,
The man who runs the paper has plainly jotted down.
Some people make fun of it, but, honestly, I like
To learn that 'work is booming upon the Jimtown
pike.'

It's just a little paper—it hasn't much to say—
But as long as it is printed I hope it comes my way.



THE NEW WOMAN.

This contest of the old folks has of subjects not a few,
And I have found an old one in the woman that is new;
I champion the cause tonight of women new and old,
And, though I may not argue much, I promise not to scold.
This is essentially an age of most distressing fads,
Look where you will, the vexing brood still multiplies or adds,
But of all follies that today before our vision flit,
There's nothing like the agony our papers pass for wit.
Take up a journal, if you choose, and see what those men think,
Who've only learned in journalism the art of wasting ink—
But I must guard my feelings here and utter naught adverse;
In any other field of life those worthies might do worse—
Yet not the coarse-grained press alone of woman has its say;
Why, from the pulpit you can hear the censure day by day.
It seems to me all our divines, from Talmage down to Bruner,
To use an Oklahoma term, think woman is a "sooner."
Some men are critics just because they cannot criticise,
And some find fault since nothing else attracts their narrow eyes,
But we should practice charity for all the purblind crew,
Who flout the woman that is old and ridicule the new.

One David Bennett Hill, who lives a most prosaic life,
And favors women all he can, by calling none his wife,
But lately found the time to say that woman works our ill—
'Tis well our other Senators can see beyond that Hill!
I'm tired of cartoon and of jibe that find their way in print,
I'm tired of all the wretched things that come from falsehood's mint,
I'm tired of men who loaf about, and want to see today
The women pass their time and slave the patriarchal way.
Those monarchs on goods-boxes throned assure us they are brave,
And long to see the day come when their country they may save,
Yet from a riot one fled fast, and when some questioned why
He ran, his stupid answer was, "Because I can not fly!"
Those men—those noble earls of pipe or haughty dukes of quid—
With arms akimbo they declare that "Kate must mind the kid;"
Or from the counter down they jump and say, "Sal goin' to vote?
W'y Sal don't hardly know enough to patch my Sunday coat!"
Or in the bar-room they assert, "For Cripple Creek we'll strike
The day that fashion hits this town and Peggy rides a bike!"
They shake their heads, and nod, and frown, and make long faces—so,
And try to prove that woman's world is just one waste of woe.

Of women let me give you now another passing view—
An evolution miracle—the woman old and new;
Those cynic fancies of the men I'm anxious to dispel;
They'll tell the truth about us when—there's nothing else to tell.
Those little fireside lords of ours may take a narrow view,
And say there's nothing out of doors that womankind can do,
But since on Eden's sacred soil the foot of Eve was set,
Has woman rocked this world below—she keeps it rocking yet.
This subject of the women—well, I find it rather vast;
Like Patrick Henry, let me judge the future by the past,
Come forth, come forth, ye mighty shades arrayed in classic rumors!
Come, aid the forced march of your sex to liberty and bloomers!
Ev'n back among the patriarchs, whose wives were weary-looking,
And trained by stern tradition's law to do the work and cooking,
I see the saintly Rachel rise—a very model neighbor—
Who on that Hebrew market was worth seven years of labor.
I see Queen Cleopatra stand, with influence gone awry:
A Roman lost a world, we're told, because she deigned to cry—
Like man's, is woman's story touched with much of grief and joy;
Behold extremes in England's Bess, and Helen, fate of Troy.
I look at Josephine, I look at Saragossa's maid,
I gaze on Florence Nightingale, for duty's call arrayed;

I seem to hear a magic spell from lips of Jenny Lind,
 Till Heaven itself is passing by upon enchanted wind!
 But long, too long, I find the list of women truly great;
 They've kept their vigil by the hearth and steered the ship of state.
 Illustrious women! annals shrink without their wondrous story;
 Their names are in the book of Fame and on the scroll of Glory!
 No man has ever risen yet to eminence or power,
 But found some woman high as he in triumph's gaudy hour.
 Take from the Bard of Avon's works all that our sex inspired,
 What would remain then to be read, much less to be admired?
 The men are jealous of us, dears, 'tis this and nothing more,
 They owned our hearts were larger in the dull old years of yore,
 And now, poor fellows! they but try by hook and crook to find
 Some flimsy old excuse to call us smaller in the mind.
 'Tis only evolution keeps the world from slow decay,
 'Tis only evolution weaves the rainbow from the spray;
 All things on water or on land, on which the sun may shine,
 Beneath its touch less earthly grow and in degree divine.
 The rose that greets the lily's soul in atmospheric rhyme,
 Think you it was as much a rose in Herod's sinful time?
 Anacreon, who choked, they say, while careless with a grape,
 Compared with peerless Tennyson, with what would he escape?
 If evolution has improved all things except the Turk,
 Then why not let it have a chance at Nature's crowning work?
 The fiat has gone forth, though man may snarl just like a brute,
 The old girl's on her muscle now, she's going to "evolute!"
 She going bravely to put off her bondage and her rags,
 And claim an equal interest in her country's laws and flags,
 Yet you will find her still, I ween, wherever you may roam,
 The mother of the family, the angel of the home.
 The failings of new women by some gentlemen are told,
 But they could spend their time as well providing for the old.
 The Coming Woman's nearly here, she's coming up to stay,
 The men may tell her "Howdy" or may simply clear the way.
 Say, are you wondering to yourselves what she will look most like?
 Well, she will look at home upon the pavement or the bike;
 Her brothers—poor, dear, modest things, who fear they'll be disgraced!
 Will they remember women have a corner on true taste?
 The Coming Woman's foot comes down like freight upon a deck,
 I trust not often it will need to touch her consort's neck;
 She's coming up for liberty of person and of soul,
 She'll wear such things as she may choose, and earn an aureole.

 The Coming Woman's very close, she's rattling dimes and dollars,
 But stops sometimes, it seems, to fix her husband's ties and collars.
 The Coming Woman's here. Ah, me! the vision all grows hazy.
 Where are the men? I do believe they all are going—crazy!

*The above poem was written to be spoken at an Old Folks' entertainment.

ADDRESS TO INGERSOLL.

Great Robert! monarch infidel!
I hope this morning you are well—
That is, in body; for in mind
You seem to jaundice much inclined—
An ailment doctors of divinity
Regret to find in their vicinity.
I ask you, Robert, to excuse
The rustic manners of my muse,
For tho' my friendship may be normal,
I hate to be too stiffly formal.

If you are well, with good digestion,
Friend Robert, let me ask a question,
Which may grow into three or five—
You lawyers know how questions thrive.
One reason why I hope you're well
It may be fitting I should tell;
Thus thought the Sage of Monticello—
When health is bad so is the fellow,
And if this morn you were dyspeptic,
You'd be a still more stubborn skeptic.
What do you get, Bob—honor bright—
For those bold lectures by the night,
In which, while knaves and fools applaud,
You hold religion is a fraud?
Bob, do you think there is no Hell,
Where Satan keeps a big hotel,
With everything in wretched shape,
And nothing like a fire escape?
Say, for a little wordly pelf,
Would you be porter there yourself?

I like you, Bob, but do not know,
I'm certain, why it should be so;
Perchance, because I have not met you,
High up among my friends I set you.
Of course you know how frequent meeting
Absorbs cordiality of greeting;
And how opinions, oft repeated,
Wake controversies long and heated.
Well, when I think upon your views
Of preachers, pulpits, creeds and pews,

I realize that it is well
 For us so far apart to dwell.
 I can admire you while so distant,
 For you are shrewd, if not consistent,
 And there throbs thro' your splendid diction
 What seems the courage of conviction:
 But if you lived upon the creek,
 Where I might see you thrice a week,
 Or sometimes help you plow or grub,
 I might regard you as a "scrub."
 Display of follies brings contempt—
 And who from follies is exempt?
 Believe now, Robert, that I like you,
 And hope no thunderbolt will strike you—
 At least before you may repent,
 And pay a little earthly rent—
 And pardon bluntness in the pen
 That may address you ne'er again.

Bob, do you most sincerely think
 A man may swindle, lie and drink,
 For every creed have words objurgatory,
 And yet need fear no pangs of purgatory?
 Sir, if you do—I'm rather candid—
 'Tis time you should be reprimanded;
 What do the preachers mean, I wonder,
 They do not scourge you from your blunder?
 I tell you, Bob, judicious licking
 Will cure the meanest mule of kicking.
 You hold there is no life beyond
 This narrow Valley of Despond—
 That nothing but the atom Here
 From us should claim a smile or tear.
 Ah, Robert, who must not deplore
 To see one grovel who might soar?
 To reach the sinner's heart—and purse—
 You mock laws of the universe,
 And say here ends what has beginning,
 In spite of righteousness or sinning.
 You preach no woes or pleasures wait
 Yon side death's subterranean gate—
 For Christians no ambrosial dinners,
 No molten brimstone bath for sinners,

Now, Bob, such doctrine will not do—
'Twill damn your dupes as well as you;
Here it gives birth to scurvy tricks,
And, Bob—look out beyond the Styx!

Dark is the theory you advance,
That life's a lottery, with a chance—
To win remorse, despair and trouble,
And burst by clutching at a bubble.
That wretch who murder foul committed,
Yet by a jury was acquitted—
Is there no court beyond our time
To make him expiate his crime?
Because he here evaded sentence,
Can he afford to scorn repentance?
Bob, do not make the masses think
The Bible is but wasted ink,
Lest some low villain, whom your pleading
Has saved from hemp that he was needing,
Might catch the atheist's heart disease,
And kill you to get back his fees!
Ah, when I read the varied tales
Of crime that in our land prevails—
Of outrage, murder, thieving, arson,
Defying sheriff, judge and parson—
I wonder, Bob, how much is due
To venal rants of cranks like you.
If you with Satan still play euchre,
To win some fame and filthy lucre,
He yet will hold both bowers and "joker,"
And win your nose, Bob, for a poker!

Thro' all the catalogue of cases,
Still sacrifice is virtue's basis—
And do they sacrifice in vain,
Who strive a better life to gain?
If virtue is a prizeless trial,
What is the use of self denial?
Oh, Bob, be not a ghoulish knave,
To get your living from the grave!
You call religion superstition
And scoff conviction and contrition.
But, hang it! you have nothing better
To offer Satan's wretched debtor.

'Tis not in sneering or in doubting
To make a mortal die a shouting;
But with false pride and courage failing,
It seems to me, there might be wailing!

Well, to some length my lines are tending,
And earthly things must have an ending;
But let me state here, just at closing:
Believing beats all mere supposing,
Altho' the latter, fresh from college,
May strut about as wordly knowledge.
You've quaffed fame's bumper to the dregs,
Without a taste of rotten eggs,
But, Bob, beware—beware of Sheol—
I fear you yet may find it real!

★ ★ ★

TO MILLIE.

A poetess takes him to task for his "Address to Ingersoll." His reply follows.

Fair critic! to you let me say,
Ere fancy gets well under way,
Although my muse is nettled,
That aught like argument I hate,
And would be pleased if you would state
What people's cry or nation's fate,
By such was ever settled.

It is a deal of empty noise,
A sport for grown up girls and boys,
A riot, chiefly mental;
Yet, since once more I find the time
To do a literary crime,
I reel you off a hank of rhyme,
My critic fair and gentle!

I wish I knew how you are styled—
That is, if Miss or Mrs.,
With lips that chide an erring child,
Or only pout for kisses;
But pass that by: I do not care
What color blushes o'er your hair,
Or whether you are young or fair,
Or whether wrinkles vex you;
But, Millie, take it not amiss,
If I am bold to tell you this—

You let your pen unsex you.
Although you do not criticise
 With unrelenting rigor,
Yet from your bow each arrow flies
 With amazonian vigor.
That God is wrong, if Bob is right,
 Is plain to saint and sinner;
And surely it seems out of place
To see a woman try the case,
And put our cherished hopes to flight,
 By making Bob the winner!

It seems to me that you believe,
We, who have sprung from Mother Eve,
In God's sweet sometime will receive
 Salvation universal:
In Eden, long ago, began
The little comedy of man,
But, friend, old Satan found a plan
 To ruin the rehearsal;
And, since that time, the play has been
A tragedy all dark with sin.

A heavy villain struts the stage,
 The thrusts he makes are real;
And they are foolish who engage
 To play with him in Sheol!
Since we have started out to walk
 Awhile in thought's dominion,
I think I'm licensed thus to talk,
 And freely spend opinion.

This hope of life immortal: where
May dwell the Stoic, who could dare
To look upon the wild despair
 The world would know without it?
'Tis that which keeps us human here,
'Tis that with beauty robes our sphere,
'Tis that which dries the mourner's tear—
 The skeptic cannot doubt it.
The Moslem on the Persian plain,
 The Indian on the Platte,
Although their fancies may be vain,
 Still have a hope of that.

One o'er Al Sirat thinks to skate,
One dreams of his canoe,
But both with tireless trust elate,
A better region view.
This Ingersoll, in mocking tone,
Declares this hope a cheat,
And even says Jehovah's throne
May be an empty seat!
He walks about, from every tomb
The amaranth to tear,
And wrapped in doubt's Plutonian gloom,
He plants the night-shade there!

I cannot think, my gentle friend,
Why such a fellow you defend,
Whose boat is in the shallows;
False teaching, Millie, you must know
May drag the parents down to woe,
Their offspring to the gallows.
Suppose, now, if you do not mind,
You had some children, color blind,
And some mendacious fellow
Should tell them that the rose is blue,
Or that the sky is yellow;
Of course it could not change the hue—
But, Millie, tell me, would you not
Denounce his falsehood on the spot?
Our God is love, our creed is duty—
That doctrine may be full of beauty,
But makes an idol of our reason,
And thus convicts us of high treason.
I war with each presumptuous clod,
Like Ingersoll, that wars with God—
The glow worm sneering at the star,
That shimmers dimly from afar!

I beg your pardon for the sin
You find in this reply,
And ere you get the rolling-pin
Just let me say—good-bye.

NIGHT SPELLIN'S.

The times ain't like they useter be,
It ain't no use to talk,
An' you may call one who complains
A simple country gawk;
But I can prove as clear as day
When Hicks don't mention rains,
This civilizin' fad has left
Us trouble for our pains.

The old protracted meetin's where
Good Deacon Strong would pray,
An' Sister Barnes would shout so loud
She skeered Old Nick away—
The old log church was allus full,
An' high the members stood;
They worship now in brick or frame—
But are the folks as good?

It's weak to deal in retrospect,
An' mourn for days gone by,
But, hang it! seems to me we've lost
Some old blue from the sky.
Today I cannot help but think
Night spellin's once we had
For solid pleasure left behind
The gayest modern fad.

The dance may serve for folks that wear
A neat and pliant shoe—
No "number" for my number tens
I ever found would do—
And seven-up when nights are long
Is quite a pleasant game,
But when night spellin's was around
All other sport was tame.

The stove now seems in sympathy
To shake its sides with mirth,
A-thinkin' of the fun I once
Could corner on the earth.
The Jaybird schoolhouse was of logs,
Not chinked muskeeter tight,
But, seen through pleasant memories, it
Was strictly out of sight.

'Twas fine to meet on moonlight nights,
Before the teacher come,
And have a game of prisoner's base,
An' spark our sweethearts some.
At Jaybird very few was bright
In Noah Webster's art,
But Cupid give us kids a spell,
An' never missed the heart.

They useter come a long ways, tho'
No road could boast a bridge—
Bill Sikes's black-eyed sister—she
Come plumb from Goshen ridge;
And Sallie Black, with auburn hair,
An' such a kissful lip,
Who passed the mitten to me twice,
Lived somewhere nigh "Old Tip."

The teacher shifted on his feet,
To sorter ease his gout,
An' jest kept standin', and pronounced
Till he was all give out.
Of foolish vowel sounds our minds
Was not inclined to think,
So when the teacher passed the word,
We allus passed the wink.

From "baker" on to "alien"—if
I've spelled the last word right—
The teacher turned and shortly had
Us all bewildered quite.
Jeff Burke was allus "major," but
He looked more like a clown;
Dad bing him! tho' he held the floor,
The girls all turned him down.

I recollect one winter night,
When Mollie looked so nice,
I saw her home, an' at the creek
We both went down on ice.
We was not hurt, but Mollie said
I was a little fool,
An' she thought I went down enough
Each blessed day at school.

I realize some chances come
To me then all in vain—
That I at spellin's failed to spell
My spellin' renders plain;
But every sweet has bitter, while
Some bitter has no sweet—
If those old times could come again
My joy would be complete!

★ ★ ★

NOW OR NEVER.

On my pathway strew your roses,
Keep them not to deck my grave;
Wait not till life's battle closes
To proclaim me true and brave.
Death is but an end of trial,
Rest upon the "lap of earth;"
If in life I meet denial,
Let no marble boast my worth.

Smiles dispel a living sorrow,
But they warm no pulseless clay—
Keep them not to gild my morrow,
Life for me is all to-day.
There is summer in love's greeting
There is strength in cordial palms,
Yet, my stay on earth is fleeting,
And in death I ask no alms.

Love me now, or love me never,
Hearts, like pansies, lose their bloom.
Succor me in life's endeavor,
Or be silent at my tomb.
With my sorrow blend your grieving,
Or restrain for aye each tear;
Wait not for my final leaving
To announce me welcome here.

Oh, this monumental folly,
False alike to heart and head!
Life grows doubly melancholy,
Hoarding kindness for the dead!
Reason is a guide for feeling,
Reason should not play the knave—
Love in life not worth revealing
Is unworthy of the grave!

GOING DOWN HILL.

Hard-hearted old world! here's a bit of advice,
That is pleasant to take—you will think it is nice.
Ye landlords, ye tenants—ye high and ye low—
The drunken, the sober, the fast and the slow—
Just take it on rising or going to bed;
It relieves a bad stomach and helps a sick head.
For all cynics 'tis better than powder or pill—
Here it is—kick the man who is going down hill!

Get up from your beds in the middle of night,
To talk of the theft, or the law-suit, or fight;
Sift the case—don't you let your false charity hide
The semblance of sin when your neighbor is tried.
Denounce him in terms that I will not repeat—
Keep rolling the morsel—'twill grow the more sweet;
With malice investigate—censure with will—
It is only his due—he is going down hill!

Out early to loaf on the road or the street,
And—be careful—do justice to all those you meet,
To him who is rising be very polite—
Prosperity waxes so wroth at a slight;
But the beggar—the bankrupt—the man of bad luck—
Why for any of these should you "care a shuck?"
Of course they may grumble, and take it quite ill,
But kick them again—they are going down hill!

That beautiful woman there, walking along—
Her brain was too weak and her heart was too strong—
A cheery good-morning might brighten her eye,
And make her believe some good angel was nigh;
But, bless you, pure dames! since you know she's
deflower'd,

Of course on her all your reproach must be shower'd.
All her hopes for the better your coldness may chill,
But give her a kick—she is going down hill!

That fellow there, reeling—the mock of the town—
A jolly good chap, but he's pretty near down—
There's little else in him than whiskey and beer,
And when sober his due is a frown or a sneer;
It can't make him better—it may make him worse
But anathemas heap up so neat on a curse!
Ye worms of the dust, he's a worm of the still—
Just give him a kick—he is going down hill!

Hard-hearted old world! now you have my advice;
It is pleasant to take—you must think it is nice.
But remember, old world, that a day is to be,
When the wicked shall tremble, with nowhere to flee;
Ah, then will the scandal, the scorn and abuse
You have heaped upon others plead you an excuse?
When Gabriel's trump all the heavens shall fill,
Beware—you may find yourself going down hill!

★ ★ ★

HER SMILE.

A meteor from the realm of soul,
An oasis amid life's cares,
A part of that supernal whole
We deem the clime celestial wears;
An inkling of Minerva's grace,
A hint of Venus' winning wile—
Ah, fleeting years can ne'er erase
From memory her witching smile!

What raptures dwelt about that mouth!
What blisses wantoned o'er those lips!
My wintry heart turned to the South,
And welcomed all its vernal ships.
The roses of the long ago
Shed fragrance down time's widening
aisle—

I swear it! ye who do not know
The magic of her matchless smile.

Those teeth, as white as lilies are,
Where Oriental breezes woo,
Shone pure and distant as some star
That twinkles in remotest blue.
Her dimpled chin has power, I vow,
The blind to seeing to beguile—
But only in remembrance now
I know the splendor of her smile.

Her glance holds sunlight for a year,
Her smile is an eternal bliss,
But, ah, young Cupid comes not near,
Lest he should err and steal a kiss!
Some painters wield a skillful brush,
And nations praise their work the while,
But Art must vainly sigh and blush,
Confronted by her wondrous smile!

A VOICE.

Yes, Sally, I am goin' to vote
To move the county-seat;
I want a market for my wool,
My apples an' my wheat.
I want a place where I can go
To pay my tax an' trade,
Where business heat is allus up
To ninety in the shade.

There aint no use in talkin' now—
You an' your brother Jake
Have allus held my wagon back,
But now I hold the brake.
Jake has some houses in the hub,
An' wants to shape my vote,
But then he purchased, as it were,
A sheep that was a goat.

I know the old town purty well—
I've been here forty year,
An' when it stands before the bar,
I can't jist call it clear.
I mutter, every time I think
How it has done us dirt,
"Go, bring the holy water out,
An' coax the hose to squirt!"

When little Glenwood tried to be
A decent sort of town,
With fifty merchants on its streets
To watch for Smith an' Brown,
Old Lancaster was to the front
An' with its knavish knack,
It gouged the county for a rail
To stab it in the back!

Some rusty splinters of that rail
To-day each voter packs—
They stick his fingers like the deuce,
While he is payin' tax.
I know, for milk already spilt
There ain't no use to cry,
But once the cow has kicked the pail—
W'y, watch her then, says I.

I've waited, waited, year by year,
For Lancaster to grow,
To reap the flatterin' harvest which
It made the county sow;
But, Sally, it jist monkeys on,
Without a sign of push,
An' pick no berries, while it pouts
For us to bring the bush.

I want a town that is a town,
A court-house fit to see,
An I propose to help the town
That thought of helpin' me.
The old hub went to Iowa
To get the start of "Tip,"
But when it downs Queen City, wife,
'Twill need a wider strip.

The old town talks of damages,
An' whines about its loss,
But would it say the saddle hurt,
If Downing owned the hoss?
Some talk about the court-house ring—
I don't know as to that,
But with a bin like Lancaster,
No county could get fat.

Yes, Sally, I am goin' to vote
To move the county-seat;
I want a hundred men to want
My apples, wool an' wheat.
Queen City's gettin' to the front,
I want to see it go—
W'y every acre of our land
Jist aches to have it grow!

★ ★ ★

"ON" THE TEACHER.

Tell you how it wuz. You see,
Nan an' Kate an' John an' me—
All us big kids, ever' one—
Right in school must hev some fun;
Throwin' wads an' bendin' pins—
Sech wuz not among our sins—

But jeewhiz! for ever' note
 Us big orkerd urchins wrote,
 'F I had ten cents salted down,
 I could own half o' this town.
 Teacher he wuz mighty strict,
 An' the kid he licked, he *licked!*
 He kep' seein' notes go round,
 First he stared an' then he frowned,
 Then at last he says, says he,
 "Read the next note that I see—
 Read it out 'fore all the school—
 Better watch an' mind the rule."
 Well, us big kids we got shy,
 Tried to swop thoughts with the eye—
 Tried to make a glance or wink
 Take the place of pen an' ink,
 But that wuz the poorest way
 Facts I've ever tried to say.
 Winked one afternoon at Kate,
 Meant I'd see her from debate,
 But she read it—mercy sake!—
 She could go an' come with Jake.
 One day, when that night, for prayer,
 To the church folks would repair,
 Dave he throwed across to Suse
 Somethin' 'at she might peruse,
 But it hit the desk, an' while
 Flutterin' down'ard in the aisle,
 Teacher saw it. Back he come,
 Lookin' awful fierce an' glum;
 Up he picked it, cleared his throat,
 Bound to read out what Dave wrote;
 Got the fold out, fixed his specks,
 Coughed enough to strain two necks,
 Tried to bresh some dust spots off,
 Blushed so much he couldn't cough,
 Raised the paper till his nose
 Teched it—lily wed to rose
 But, sir, he could not commence
 Out of that to make some sense!
 All us big-uns knowed at once
 What wuz makin' him a dunce,

Gettin' redder all the while—
 An' we giggled? I should smile!
 Some long feller had come through,
 Teachin' short-hand to a few;
 Dave an' Suse had lessons took
 An' could write some off the book;
 Dave's note wuz a short-hand bid
 To cut out some other kid.
 Short-hand to the teacher's view
 Wuz as queer as Greek or Jew,
 Through the stove the note in smoke
 Went, an' thus the teacher spoke:
 "When some makes more chicken tracks,
 I will make some on their backs."

★ ★ ★

DE DOG STAR BITES.

De mohnin's sizz an' de ebenin's blaze.
 Oh, my, but de dog star bites,
 It keeps gittin' hotter 'bout a million ways,
 Oh, my, but de dog star bites;
 De wartermillion squirm on his red hot stem,
 Dinah's toe nail look like a ruby gem,
 An' threatens to scorch her Mother Hubbard's hem,
 Oh, my, but de dog star bites!

De heat goes up fo' miles in de shade,
 Oh, my, but de dog star bites,
 De taller of de possum I spect's done made,
 Oh, my, but de dog star bites;
 De coon dog's tongue am a streak of fire,
 De hoppergrass scorch ef he tech a wire,
 An' de tadpole's baked in de Haw Creek mire,
 Oh, my, but de dog star bites!

Yan cloud dat monkey in the sky erwhile,
 Oh, my, but de dog star bites,
 Hain't got ernough warter to start to bile,
 Oh, my, but de dog star bites;
 Dey say every dog gwineter have his day—
 Jes listen, lazy niggahs, to what I say—
 Ise gwine soon to give all my houn's away,
 Oh, my, but de dog star bites!

No dog days shine thro' de pearly gates,
Oh, my, but de dog star bites,
Dar de niggahs cake walk on golden skates,
Oh, my, but de dog star bites;
St. Petah, drap me down my wings so nice,
A big watermillion an' a ton of ice,
An I'll black yo' boots for to pay de price,
Oh, my, but de dog star bites!



THE ELOQUENCE OF CASH.

Demosthenes could change a law
By talking half an hour,
And Rome beheld in Tully's jaw
Another sign of power;
Our Webster was the nation's pride,
Clay mocked the meteor's flash—
But tongue of man has ne'er supplied
The eloquence of cash.

The fakir and the candidate
Have dictionary wiles,
And more than most with words can state,
They can express with smiles;
But none these worthies may ignore,
While human hearts they mash,
Through eloquence of tongue they soar
To eloquence of cash.

Our Senators take up a theme
And air it for renown,
While silent nabobs spring a scheme
That rains persimmons down.
Tramps try the eloquence of speech
In vain for bread and hash,
But naught on earth's beyond the reach
Of eloquence of cash.

Our boys and girls we ought to teach
The language of our time;
The nickel is one part of speech,
Another is the dime.
Once Cupid gave my heart a roast,
My flame was named Miss Dash;
I popped, and lost—I could not boast
The eloquence of cash!

BILL.

Tho' christened William, trite and tame,
Soon ruthless custom changed his name;
As Bill he laid his dress aside,
And first the welcome trousers tried;
As Bill he ceased to want the moon,
And learned to hum his earliest tune,
His name was shortened, but not he—
He ran up like a maple tree,
And as to sanguine youth he grew,
His aim in life was just to do;
It made no odds what task or plan
Was set him by a boy or man—
If some one said, "Bill, just see here,
This job for you is too severe"—
He'd crack his fists and drop his hat,
And cry, "Sich tasks jest makes me fat,"
Then sail right in, and strain and try,
And do the thing, or almost die!
He would have been all right, no doubt,
And long life might have rounded out,
Had his blind zeal been less intense,
And tempered with some common sense.
He had no use for books—not much—
No slate or atlas would he touch,
And in the lexicon he knew
Not page thirteen from fifty-two,
Tho' oft and often he averred,
'Impossible's a crazy word!'
A raw disciple of the school,
That holds the task awaits the tool,
And difficulties fly before
The man who keeps resolve in store.
He strove to do the wondrous still,
And awe the world by feats of will.
Three years he sought, in hopeful youth,
The man who always tells the truth,
And long himself did he exert
To find the maid who would not flirt,
But, what is worse, the silly elf
Would bet that he could lift himself,
And tried so long, and grew so thin,
His friends thought he at last might win.

Well, Bill was twenty-two, perhaps,
 And felt removed from common chaps,
 'Twas at a picnic's pleasant scene—
 A railroad crossed a big ravine,
 And left a pond all round about,
 As if from Nature's lap poured out.
 A maid, some notice to entice,
 Said, "Bill can't swim across there twice."
 Bill promptly shed his shoes and coat,
 And launched in, like a living boat.
 He reached the further shore—at once
 He turned unrested, like a dunce;
 Near mid-way he was seized with cramp,
 Or else his clothes became too damp,
 At any rate, poor Bill went down,
 While all the crowd cried, "He will drown!"
 They watched him as he rose and sank,
 And help reluctant left the bank—
 But when they reached him, Bill was dead,
 And on the bottom lay like lead.
 They fished him up—and at the tomb
 Some tears bespoke a passing gloom,
 And there the maiden simpering spoke,
 "Too bad for Bill—it was a joke!"
 A limestone slab stands o'er his grave,
 To hint that he at least was brave,
 On which a wag, with little skill,
 Carved, deeply carved, the lone word WILL.

★ ★ ★

POE.

Genius daring and transcendent!
 Where is now thy home resplendent?
 Does a single sphere contain all that is left of Edgar
 Poe?
 Spurned, traduced, uncomprehended,
 Till thy earthly trials ended—
 To what realm hast thou ascended,
 In what sun's unfailing glow?
 On what radiant shore of Noonday haply dost thou
 dwell now,
 By what stream's Lethean flow?

Far beyond the path of Dian,
Or beyond the bold Orion,
Dost thou "bathe in dreams of seraphs," spotless as
the virgin snow?
But, alas! I cannot borrow,
From the far and vague to-morrow,
Words to drive away the sorrow
That to-night must still bestow—
Sorrow born of hoping, doubting, striving and de-
spairing,
Felt by dwellers here below!

Oh, the heart-break and the sobbing
Thro' the "Raven" swelling—throbbing—
Like the deep and sullen echoes of the ocean's mystic
woe!
Mighty puzzle to dismay us,
Wondrous psychologic chaos,
Where we feel, but cannot know!
Still it thunders forth its moaning, leaving us to
wonder
Why it is complaining so,
Fields of promise smiled before him,
When the storm winds mustered o'er him,
And 'mid desolation's havoc left him, lying maimed
and low;
Where they mocked at his condition,
Till he half forgot his mission,
And despaired of the fruition
Of the harvest he might sow;
But tho' wounded and neglected, to fame's frowning
summits
Mighty genius bade him go.

Deep toned curses from the mountains,
Mocking laughter from the fountains,
Smote upon his shrinking hearing as he wandered
to and fro.
From his torments what could hide him,
While his demon staid beside him,
Racing wild, or pacing slow?
Ah, a bold but morbid fancy, goaded on by vices,
Is a most relentless foe!

Lover of that maiden sainted,
 In thy deathless poem painted!
 Does the raven still make answer with that weird,
 eternal no?
 Let me hope, bright shade transplanted!
 By that bird no longer haunted,
 Thou art all the raptures granted,
 For which thou didst pine below—
 Raptures endless—raptures perfect, with unfailing
 splendor
 Like the lustrous name of Poe!

* * *

TO WEBSTER DAVIS.

Ah, Web, or Webster—as you please—
 We do not come on bended knees,
 With tearful tones to beg you back,
 To where you left a shining track.
 When politicians plan and plot,
 They should recall a phrase from Scott,
 That shows, when candor starts to ebb,
 There's apt to be a "tangled web."
 Believe, with sobs we are not strangled,
 Altho' we find you sorely tangled.
 We do not wield a party whip
 To govern any vote or lip;
 The ballot free, and free the man—
 That is our doctrine and our plan;
 But look well, sir, while big checks cashing—
 The Bourbon chiefs delight in lashing;
 The fellow they adjudge worth hiring,
 To earn his pay must be untiring.
 There's something in your given name
 That hints a pensive fall of fame;
 One March day many years ago,
 A star long brilliant shot so low,
 It lost the jewel in the clod,
 Inspiring Whittier's "Ichabod."
 Ah, Web, why mock the "God-like Daniel,"
 And with the "yallers" lose the spaniel?
 We prized you and your lofty voice,
 And you were frequently our choice,

When there were loyal souls galore
 To watch the eagle swoop and soar.
 In statesmanship you had no practice,
 But you could swing the verbal cactus,
 To sting the backs of those who swore
 That Uncle Sam's best days were o'er.
 Oh, Web! sing on the patriot's clef,
 And play no Davis role like Jeff;
 Remembering still your former virtue,
 We fear that such a flop would hurt you.
 Poor, tangled Web, whom men deceive!
 The Democrats laugh in the sleeve,
 To hear you pouring out your soul
 Thro' your old hat with bloodless hole!
 For mullen fields you've left good clover—
 The Transvaal war is almost over,
 And on "imperialism" you're stranded,
 For we already have expanded.
 Go on and wear the Bryan collar,
 Call 40 cents an honest dollar;
 Your words an idle ear will catch—
 Alas, that you lack thoughts to match!
 You leave us not in grievous plight—
 Your tongue is longer than your sight.

* * *

FAIR TIME IN MIZZOORY.

Fair time in grand old Mizzoory!
 Ain't it somethin' that's immense?
 Leave it to a judge or jury—
 Anything 'at's got half sense!
 Oh, the apples an' the peaches,
 Sweet as kisses gone to waste,
 An' the punkin 'at beseeches
 One to slice an' bake an' taste!
 Then it is we git together,
 Jest as mortals ort to do.
 In them fair weeks while the weather
 Seems to want a ribbon too—
 For old Sol turns on his splendor,
 In a way to win a prize,
 From the heavens as blue an' tender
 As your sweetheart's bonny eyes!

In the buggy or the wagon,
 People turn out neatly dressed,
 With that most convincin' braggin'—
 An abundance of the best.
 Merry-go round, banjo, fiddle,
 All swear on a stack of dimes,
 Old Mizzoory's in the middle
 Of a patch of prosp'rous times.
 Fancy work to daze your fancy,
 Woman's touches through the hall—
 Call her Jane or call her Nancy—
 She's a daisy now, that's all!
 Hogs an' cattle for a nation,
 Horses graceful as a hymn—
 Tell your friends an' your relation
 Old Mizzoory's in the swim!
 Fair time in grand old Mizzoory—
 It's O. K., I must insist;
 Let Lucullus wake in fury,
 Thinkin' of the fun he's missed!
 How or where I yit may wander,
 Let my fare be coarse or fine,
 So I find the Fair Up Yonder,
 With Mizzoory all in line!

★ ★ ★

THE SHODDY AGE.

"Say, boy, who was Byron?" once I asked
 Of a youth on his way to school;
 Such intelligence in his bright eye basked,
 It was plain he was no fool.
 He shifted uneasily on his feet,
 He fingered the brim of his hat,
 And he said, "I believe my Uncle Pete
 Calls my oldest cousin that!"
 "Well, you have the 'Raven' by heart, I think,"
 Said I, "Tell me who was Poe?"
 But he answered, with a comical blink,
 "I have only got a pet crow!"
 I questioned, "Who was Shakespeare, then?"
 He replied, with a brighter look,
 "My teacher said he was one of the men
 Who helped to make my book!"

Quoth I, "What of Dickens do you know?"

And his accents were quite sad,
And he said, "It's the place I'm told to go,
When my brother or playmate is mad!"
"Well, boy, of Walter Scott have you heard,
And the works that he wrought of yore?"
He answered, "Joe Sykes said some such a word
When the teacher thought he swore!"

"Of Bonaparte, boy, what do you know?"

Without a semblance of shame,
He said, "I one time heard in a show
A clown call a horse that name!"

"George Washington, then, sir—what was he?
Can you tell me that or not?"

"Oh, I've heard of him, but—let me see—
I can't recollect just what!"

"Well, some facts from Grant's eventful life—
Can you give me just a few?

Such an actor in colossal strife
Admiring nations view."

"Yes, he was a chap that loved to kill,
Wherever he found a foe,
Just a sort of high-toned Buffalo Bill,
Or civilized Buckskin Joe!"

I grew so impatient with the youth,
That I growled, "Now, boy, see here;
I want you to tell the honest truth—
How much do you read in a year?"

A thoughtful look his countenance bore,
Till thus he was pleased to speak,

"Well, in a year say a hundred and four,
Or two dime novels a week!"

Curiosity's measure then was full,

And the secret I will not keep:
'Tis a loss to merit to be all wool,
While "shoddy goods" are so cheap.

It is well enough to be reaching high
For the star-dust of a name,

But food for the mind the masses now buy
From the ten cent counter of fame.

A FORMER FRIEND.

In schooling days I had a friend,
Disfigured by old age,
And information he could give
From many a printed page.
I'd read of Mary and her lamb,
And "baker" learned to spell,
Before I found he was my friend,
Or knew him very well.

A stern, exacting friend he was,
And yet a teacher kind,
Who strove to render members clear
To my benighted mind.
Orthography he ne'er admired,
And writing made him frown,
And simply nothing did he care
For adjective or noun.

He had a way of stating truths
That could not be denied,
And yet to understand those truths
In vain I often tried.
Inexorable would he be,
When I was puzzled sore,
And as I more impatient grew,
He puzzled me the more.

His tales were drawn from real life,
His fancies well expressed;
He always gave the plot, and said,
"Now you supply the rest!"
He had some simple proofs, which made
All that he told quite clear;
But still I thought him stupid, and
Lent but a careless ear.

I do not know his politics—
I never asked him that;
I've heard him speak of Radicals,
But of no Democrat.
Though much he talked about the square,
No architect was he;
And though he knew the use of roots,
A quack he could not be.

He was a steadfast friend to me,
This fact is plain at last—
Ah, that I had but known it, ere
My schoolboy days were past!
Altho' I have not seen his back
For many a lonesome day,
I hear that he is living yet—
His name is AL. G. BRAY.

★ ★ ★

INDEPENDENCE LINES.

Let us honor grand Old Glory
On this Independence Day.
For once more it floats its colors
O'er united Blue and Gray.
Some have gone from little Schuyler,
And from Glenwood, one or two,
To defend that sacred emblem,
Glorious old Red, White and Blue.

All the story of that banner
Is as spotless as its white,
For it's ever stood for Freedom,
For humanity and right;
It to-day in southern breezes
Waves defiance unto Spain,
That in beauteous, suffering Cuba
Barbarism shall end its reign.

Hobson's name will live for ages,
Dewey's fame will never die,
But our countless humble heroes
Have a courage just as high.
Gallant Woodson, Ayers and Roberts,
From our midst to fight they went,
And we pledge them faithful soldiers,
In the battle or the tent.

Tho' the Maine we well remember,
And its fate that winter night,
Yet we battle less for vengeance
Than for liberty and right.
Let us honor, then, Old Glory,
On this Independence Day;
Little Schuyler's patriotic,
And by Uncle Sam will stay.

Sung by the Independence choir at Glenwood, July 4, 1900.

THE LATE CEMENTED.

Not John, nor James, nor Bill,
Not Roderick, Jack nor Phil,
Hast thou been christened, fellow from Sa-
vannah!

Alas! stern fate gave thee no mother,
No father, uncle, niece or brother,
Nor yet a charming sister Jane or Hannah!
Thou hadst no birth, thou late cemented,
Not raised nor nurtured, just invented;
Not built of flesh nor yet of clay,
Not built to stack Maud Muller's hay—
What is thy real name and business, pray?
Whence didst thou come, thou prince of fakes,
Unstoried as Kentucky snakes,
That in some colonel's barrel breed disaster?
Ere thou didst seek the Hawkeye State,
What climate measured out thy fate?
Deep is the mystery, but wait—
We judge thou art from Paris by thy plaster.

No aching ailment yanked thee hence,
Thou late cemented,
Thou hadst no awful, crushing sense
Of evils unrepented;
Thou ne'er didst know a mortal pang,
Like cholera or dropsy,
For thee no wedding chorus rang,
To thee no maiden slung her slang,
As nonchalant as Topsy.
Thou ne'er hast known the doctor's pill,
Thou hast not met the tailor's bill,
That makes us sigh for Adam's toilet;
Thy character is not the kind
Thy fleshly fellows leave behind,
For every breath of caustic truth to soil it.
The social spirit moves our pen,
We must treat thee as other men,
And name thee, sir, as Nil,
Yet if thou'rt of the upper-ten,
And like thy name in tandem,
Why, hang thee! have thine own way still,
And be Nil Desperandum!

We do not madly dote on thee,
 Thou late cemented:
 An egotist in thee we see—
 On self stuck badly as can be,
 And all in self contented;
 But from our censure go scot free,
 For so thou wert invented.
 The laws of compensation run
 Through all thy vague, dark story,
 Thou hast not known a world of fun,
 Nor lost a world of glory.
 On many neighbors we can look,
 And wish them more like thee—
 Yes, even the pompous Joseph Cook
 More like thee well might be;
 For while thou hast done naught to raise
 Mankind to some exalted level,
 There's little, sir, in all thy ways
 To send us headlong to the devil.
 Thy trial was the very first
 In equity's new spacious seat;
 And if of rogues thou art our worst,
 Our record's pretty hard to beat!
 Thy backbone—well it could be worse,
 Thy cheek—let anarchists admire it:
 But here we halt our limping verse,
 Until some newer fakes inspire it.

*The above refers to the "petrified man" "discovered" near Savannah, Iowa some years since. He was a clever counterfeit of cement, with an iron spinal column.

* * *

EDISON'S FRAUD.

There's nothing new beneath the sun
 This long ago was said,
 But Progress since that dreamy time
 Has pushed her cart ahead.
 Let preachers rant and cynics sneer,
 I'm sure I do not care;
 'Tis plain enough that mankind still
 Get higher up the stair,

'Tis true some puzzles salted down
 By sages long ago,
To-day we label as the things
 No mortal man can know.
'Tis true when reaching for some facts
 We only get the tail,
But we are folks that bravely try,
 And never murmur fail.
There's nothing new! Get out you crank!
 When Homer was a boy,
Was there a single steamboat run
 From anywhere to Troy?
Don't tell me when Josephus lived,
 Some engine showed its power,
'Twixt Bagdad and Jerusalem,
 At thirty miles an hour!
There's nothing new! Did Solomon
 E'er eat a lemon pie?
What ancient stole an almanac
 From planets in the sky?
Once people called upon the stars
 To settle their disputes;
We see Orion's belt and know
 He's not a star that shoots.
Oh, we're improving all the time,
 There is no doubt of that;
Old Cleopatra never saw
 A Mary Walker hat.
We have inventions by the score,
 Quite worthy of renown,
But Edison appears so vain
 We ought to take him down.
The phonograph—that noisy thing,
 That tells all it has heard,
And which on every kind of theme
 Must have the final word—
He calls it his invention, but
 His story few believe;
I say Jehovah made the first,
 And Adam called it Eve!

HOLMES.

The great Last Leaf he lived to be—

Like one high on a maple spray,
That, loyal to the parent tree,
Grows still more beautiful in decay,
Then brightly passes to repose,
When hoar-frost whitens over all,
And on the startled fancy glows,
A daylight meteor in its fall.

Long life, that wore fruition's crown,
Brave heart, that smiled o'er sorrow's surge—
The solar walk of proud renown
He trod serenely to the verge,
Then stepped across the mystic bar,
Perchance a wider field to know,
But like some quenched, far-distant star,
Left in our hearts an after-glow.

Lord of himself, he lived a peer,
Seer of the wisest, he was strong;
In wit he rose a pioneer,
And seemed a comrade in his song.
Beyond the years of passion's slave,
He lived to pass thro' widening spheres,
And men unborn shall seek his grave,
To con a lesson thro' their tears.

The great Last Leaf he was indeed,
And Autumn's gorgeous aureole,
As if for him Fame came to plead,
Wept sunshine round his parting soul.
'Tis well he faded when the Year
Grew wan to feel chill nights descend;
The harmony of his career
Abided even in the end.

★ ★ ★

THE LAY OF THE BLUE BIRD.

A blue bird sitting upon a fence,
Toory, loory, loo.
Though he was a little short of sense,
His vanity was most intense,
Toory, loory, loory, loo.

I saw him light and heard him say,
 Toory, loory, loo,
 I'm glad I came from the south away,
 The weather is just as perfect as May,
 Toory, loory, loory, loo."

"The people all know that it is spring,
 Toory, loory, loo,
 When first they happen to hear me sing—
 Weather wisdom is a very fine thing,
 Toory, loory, loory, loo."

"I'm the early bird that gets the worm,
 Toory, loory, loo,
 I'll join with a partner in a firm,
 And nest before the heated term,
 Toory, loory, loory, loo."

Then he wiped his nose upon his knee,
 Toory, loory, loo,
 And chuckled in his selfish glee,
 "Men as well as birds might learn from me,
 Toory, loory, loory, loo."

"I've oftentimes known men to wait,
 Toory, loory, loo,
 Till the fish had stolen all their bait,
 Then jerk their hooks and swear at fate,
 Toory, loory, loory, loo."

He flapped his wings and flew away,
 Toory, loory, loory, loo.
 But next morn I passed him where he lay,
 Frozen dead and stiff, I'm sorry to say,
 Toory, loory, loory, loo.

I extracted this moral from his woe,
 Toory, loory, loo,
 Don't always be first to enter the show,
 The lion might chance to be hungry, you know,
 Toory, loory, loory, loo.

Ye candidate, now take my advice,
 Toory, loory, loo,
 Though the political pool looks very nice,
 Don't be jumping in till its clear of ice,
 Toory, loory, loory, loo.

ON THE WAR.

We want no war with Germany,
We want no war, I say!
If Bismarck starts across the sea,
We all would better pray.
That far away Pacific isle,
With some few tons of truck,
Can hardly make it worth our while
To test the Teutons' pluck.

Let Cleveland keep a little cool,
Let Bayard not be rash;
A Dutchman is a little tool
That cuts a fearful gash.
A skillful arm has Uncle Sam,
With saber or with "pop."
But why should Bismarck care a—clam,
If he can stay on top?

I tell you just how it would be—
The artful foe would cheer,
And all our temperate troops would flee
Soon as they smelt the beer.
And little triumph might be won
By those still left, I think;
Each tippler would exchange his gun
And knapsack for a drink.

Some cranks suppose a daring scout
About their camp might creep,
And chloroform an army's crout,
And put them all to sleep.
This is a visionary scheme,
As reason must affirm—
It baffles still the chemist's dream,
To drug a cabbage worm!

The German sailors would come o'er,
With ugly guns and fleets,
And hot Limburgher they would pour
Into our city streets.

Few would be left in one short day
The awful tale to tell;
Jeewhiz! My hair would soon grow gray
From thinking of that smell!

Samoa—I will NOT say more
I might augment the fuss;
This topic has become a bore,
And I will leave it thus;
We want no war with Germany,
We want no war, I say—
If Bismarck starts across the sea,
I mean to run away!

* * *

EXTREMES.

I've heard them say that one extreme
Another always follows,
And I have seen vales on a stream
Give way to bluffs and hollows;
And so it goes the whole world through,
There is no end of changes—
Why, ev'n the great plains lend a view
Of lofty mountain ranges!
You may be broke awhile so flat,
That friends scarce recognize you,
Then find your purse some day so fat,
That politicians prize you.
The longest lane you ever tread
May have so sharp a turning,
That you may bump a bike ahead,
With headlight brightly burning.
The hottest day that August claims
Ere eve may cool with hailing,
And oft the brightest statesmen's names
Grow dim by dark assailing.
Just think—last year the sun so shone,
That rivers had to sizzle,
While this, the smallest cloudlet known
Could mimic Noah's drizzle.
Ah, yes, the world's so built, my friend,
The sharps and flats keep mixing,
But we must find out in the end,
It's all beyond our fixing.
Accept the dictum—one extreme
Another always follows,
And let the snowbird reign supreme
Until we see the swallows.

TO CZOLGOSZ.

And thou hast reached thy limit's bound,
 Ferocious, fated fool!
By ruthless iron walled around,
 Ambition's broken tool!
To fiend the coward in thee turned,
So well the lesson thou hast learned,
 In crime's accursed school;
Ah, who in all the teeming world,
Would to thy awful depths be hurled?
The fame that thou didst seek is sunk
 In infamy so dark,
No miscreant alive, though drunk,
 Thy name for praise would mark.
A deluge cold of scorn and hate.
As fitting portion of thy fate,
 Finds thee beyond the ark;
Like noxious mist from some morass,
We feel thy reeking record pass.
Thou art no martyr hero—no!
 The hero has a cause;
No crank—the crank at least can show
 Respect for human laws;
Thou art an impulse driven curse,
A nightmare of the universe,
 To earn hell's own applause;
A maniac in open risk,
In walks of men a basilisk!
Assassin! Yes, that cursed name
 To thee we must apply;
The Goldman she-wolf shares the blame,
 And with thee she should die!
Too long the nation has been blind
To these and all thy dastard kind,
 Asps of the evil eye!
No more our Presidents shall bleed—
We swear to crush with thee thy creed.
Like lightning from a zenith clear
 Thy heinous deed flashed out,
In such a tranquil atmosphere,
 The world first heard in doubt;

He whom the deadly lead assailed
Had so contended, so prevailed,
His name inspired a shout:
Oblivion's dark recesses ache
For all thy kind, thou human snake!

★ ★ ★

WHEN THE CORN'S LAID BY.

All the world's completer,
Every pleasure's sweeter
When the corn's laid by;
Nothin' then molestin',
Weeks and weeks of restin',
Fishin', sparkin', jestin',
When the corn's laid by.

Picnic and reunion,
Loose and close communion,
When the corn's laid by;
Bee-trees full of honey,
Hearts all light and sunny,
Life is fast and funny
When the corn's laid by.

Every day a blessin'
Call for Sunday dressin',
When the corn's laid by;
Loafin' where it's shady
With your best young lady,
Jennie, Kate or Sadie,
When the corn's laid by.

Sunny hours, or rainin',
Few are heard complainin'
When the corn's laid by;
Politics and peaches,
Truth the wise man teaches,
Are in all our reaches
When the corn's laid by.

Heaven will seem completer
When we learn from Peter
All the corn's laid by;
No more sharpers sharpin',
No more silly carpin',
Only song and harpin'
When it's all laid by.

THOUGHTS ON THE CLERKS.

In the busy old world 'tis a busy old life,
For bachelor, benedict, spinster or wife,
Old Adam in Eden the sentence incurred,
And they have been few who've evaded the word.
Earning bread by the "sweat of the brow"—ah, 'tis hard
On the section-hand, President, preacher or bard,
But if some immunity comes down with wealth,
We are told too much leisure kills honor and health.
In the battle of life 'tis the busy succeed,
And boldly press onward from purpose to deed.
The millionaire's scion may loll at his ease,
And purchase profession or college degrees,
But in the hot sweepstakes for merit and place,
The son of the poor man throws dust in his face.
The god-son of Mammon not often may thrive,
But dwindles away while the fittest survive.
The work shop of Satan—some writer has said—
The idler takes with him—'tis found in his head;
This point I'll make stronger my fancy to suit—
A twelvemonth of loafing means six months a brute.
"Be occupied, would you be happy," they say—
"Life's cares only serve to drive dull care away;
Employed in the day and contented at night,
The past will be tranquil, the future be bright.
This theory sages of leisure hold out—
'Tis a bitter-sweet truth weary mortals will doubt.
This world, my young friend, you will find so perverse,
Our daintiest blessing oft seems like a curse.
Employment's a blessing—oh, read it in tones
That sigh for worn fingers and sob for sore bones!
All labor is pleasure—but say it not where
The drone of the wheel is the dirge of despair!
Go, ask in the brickyard, the foundry, the mill,
If labor—sweet labor—there drives out all ill;
Go, question the rustic who follows the plow,
If the angel of labor there kisses his brow!
Those fellows the social horizon who scan,
Say labor stands solely 'twixt ruin and man,
But millions would hazard their hopes to be blest
For a week of enjoyment and freedom and rest.

Since chaos evolved old creation's vast plan,
No human has looked on a satisfied man;
Wealth given, health wanted, health given, wealth sought,
Pursuit is the passion, possession is naught;
The workman wants leisure, the loafer wants cash—
Yes, blessings fall round us—but break in the crash!
I am not a pessimist, but when I'm tired
My muse with the truest of truth is inspired.
If labor's an element potent to bless,
Why can't we all manage to drudge somewhat less?
Work is suicide simple, as moderns take hold,
And strain for preferment, distinction and gold.
Tho' we might do better, instead we grow worse,
Transforming the blessing we boast to a curse,
To get a fair glimpse of the pleasure of work,
Just watch a few moments the average clerk;
No tax on the muscles like rail-splitters feel,
No dismal forebodings about the next meal—
Ah, surely if work is a pledge of delight,
We here of its comforts may get a rare sight.
But ere you let envy your feelings beguile,
Go round to the store and observe him awhile.
Like a football kept bounding 'twixt counter and shelf,
In pleasing all others he can't please himself.
He deals with all classes, and must wear a smile,
Tho' treated with insolence, choler and bile;
The "cheek" of his customers often would probe
Thro' all the tried patience of wretched old Job;
With stupid and crafty he kindly must deal,
Who—failing to cheat him—avow he will steal.
Preoccupied persons come into the store,
Get prices, and leave without shutting the door;
Old ladies will jew him whole hours at a time,
And, screwing up courage, at last spend a dime.
If he is a drug clerk he finds many ills
In ipecac, iodine, quinine and pills;
For in filling prescriptions out this or that way,
He makes patients healthy or only cold clay.
An incident comes to my memory here
Which serves to make some of his troubles more clear.
A certain old lady in need of repair,
Had heard of the cure-alls compounded by Ayer;

To town soon she hied her a bottle to buy,
 With intellect hardly so clear as her eye.
 "Ayer's Sassyerriller!" she said to the clerk,
 And gave her right arm an imperative jerk;
 "I tole my ole man I'm not going to die,
 While Sassyerriller we've money to buy!"
 The clerk reached a bottle—she noticed, alas!
 Inscribed on the wrapper the words "Lowell, Mass.,"
 And with indignation and lofty disdain,
 Said: "Air you a swindler, or air you insane?
 Sir, I've got the cash, but won't spend it with you—
 I didn't want mass, either Lowell or blue!"
 With trouble like this, hard on patience and pride,
 Not the drug clerk alone, but all salesmen are tried;
 Their energies fettered, their spirits confined,
 Small leisure for sport or improvement of mind;
 On holidays, by all their neighbors enjoyed,
 More ruthlessly tasked and more deeply annoyed—
 The slave of all others, the tyrant of self,
 The clerk disowns pleasure in scrambling for pelf.
 The hope of the poet, which always is bright,
 I wish I could catch from the omens in sight,
 But if rightly I'm reading the signs of the times,
 They mean harder drudging for nickels and dimes.
 God pity the busy from banker to clerk,
 And pity me too—for I must go to work!

* * *

SUMMER TIME.

Summer in Missouri—just the rarest time on earth!
 Pumpkin vines a-creeping up to tell the corn their mirth;
 Clouds like dreaming beauties, leaves adance with joy—
 Why, the fiftieth summer like it makes one feel just like a boy!
 Summer in Missouri—oh, I tell you it is grand!
 Plenty in the kitchen and peace in all the land;
 Cabbage in the garden, apples on the tree—
 Summer in Missouri—that's the rarest time for me!
 Summer in Missouri—yes, I know the passing years
 Bring along a sprinkle of regrets and bitter tears;
 But I tell you, honest, and my pencil rarely lies,
 I'd hate to swop our summer for a week in Paradise!

Summer in Missouri—ah, it is a happy time!
 Every bird a-singing with its native gift of rhyme—
 Things around you loving and working with a will—
 If you're cold and selfish now you're mean enough to kill!
 Summer in Missouri—work enough for all the week—
 Sunday sowing kisses on your sweetheart's willing cheek!
 Hope to last a life-time, ready cash to hoard or spend—
 Ah, my friend, Missouri summers I will wish you to the end!

★ ★ ★

VOLAPUK.

Am I a crank, because I say—
 Nor care how many hear—
 The wondrous chiliastic day
 At last is drawing near?
 Cry, "visionary!" if ye will,
 Or look your mute disdain;
 The happy time approaches still,
 When Volapuk shall reign.
 The World's Fair is a growing theme—
 But let the cities row;
 I hope in fighting for the cream,
 They will not kill the cow.
 Perchance where'er the Fair shall be,
 The sons of France or Spain
 May talk with men from Tennessee,
 And Volapuk shall reign.
 The musket's oath shall die away,
 The cannon's thunder cease;
 That tongue of universal sway
 Shall be a pledge of peace.
 Diplomacy 'twixt man and man
 Will proud concessions gain,
 And kingdoms be a shattered plan,
 When Volapuk shall reign.
 War's pestilential banners furled,
 And boundaries unknown,
 O'er one Republic of the World
 Shall Freedom rear her throne.

Say, do I prophesy amiss,
And only hope in vain?
Jove favor us, at least with this,
When Volapuk shall reign!

Methinks it will be fun to hear
Some Navajo or Sioux
Breathe in a Patagonian's ear
His civil service view.
The Yale alumnus—should he meet
Some Arab on the plain,
Could talk of horses or of wheat,
When Volapuk shall reign.

The Dantes of the coming day
Will write for every clime,
And clear in Denmark and Cathay
Will be each London rhyme.
Walt Whitman's will be widely read,
'Tho' now they rack the brain,
And Browning's will new luster shed,
When Volapuk shall reign.

"The world shall be evangelized"—
So Talmage says, not I;
His bold opinions should be prized,
But mine—well, I might lie.
"The world shall be evangelized"—
How such an end attain,
Till thought is in one tongue comprised.
And Volapuk shall reign?

Throw Zendavesta in the sea,
Give Koran to the flame—
Yet tell me how men might agree,
With language not the same.
How many have in far Japan
Been told of Lot or Cain?
A narrow hope has fallen man,
Till Volapuk shall reign.

Let state be groom and church be bride,
And faith and deed conform,
And Zion will triumphant glide,
Thro' each Plutonian storm.

Ye holy ones! no schism can save,
No bigotry can stain;
Heaven keep each sinner from the grave,
Till Volapuk shall reign!

Lords will be peasants, peasants lords,
In that approaching time;
No virtue will want its rewards,
Its penalties no crime.
The demagogue—I do not know,
But think his star will wane,
When lies and boodle cease to flow,
And Volapuk shall reign.

Then love will be an easy task,
On ocean or on land,
And Erin's son can glibly ask
An Andalusian hand.
The faculty some fellows lack
Of popping prompt and plain;
They will not writhe so on the rack,
When Volapuk shall reign.

Old fogies may heap ridicule
Upon my muse and me,
But if they they think the bard a fool,
Just let them wait and see.
But I am running short of rhyme,
And here must end my strain,
Yet hope to write another time,
When Volapuk shall reign.

*Volapuk—A proposed universal language.

* * *

JOB JAXON.

Job Jaxon lived upon a farm,
By force of will and strength of arm;
He loved the "good old airy days,"
And hooted at "new-fangled ways."
His fences were of stake and rail,
His thresher always was the flail;
Machinery's humming made him writhe,
He mowed his meadow with a scythe;
His corn was "drapped" to make it grow,
And "kivered" with an ancient hoe.

For plans he substituted sweat,
And just had time to work and fret.
He told his wife—"It beats the Dutch,
How people want to know so much;
I say a feller knows enough
To gradyate when up to snuff.
A Congressman has got to know
What makes a country balk or go;
A farmer's rich in noodle means,
If he knows pumpkins, corn and beans."
Of knowledge this remained his view,
He talked it and he lived it, too.

Job didn't take the Beanville "Bee"—
"No honey thar fur me," says he;
"I reckon some folks like it some,
But I've no use for drones, by gum!
No matter where a feller jumps,
He takes the measles an' the mumps,
Some time or other, but, you see,
He gits 'em right an' strictly free;
I'll never cut a foolish caper,
An' pay out cash to take a paper."
His wife and children argued long,
But Job in will was very strong;
Except from home, they could not see
A copy of the "Weekly Bee."
One week the paper stated plain—
"Still swindlers work with might and main;
We learn that one, two counties south,
Has most persuasive mien and mouth;
In some fake seed corn lies his ruse,
And well he minds his P's and Q's;
Until the farmers he perplexes
Quite fail to mind their V's and X's.
Our readers in advance we warn—
Beware of shark with bogus corn."

Such warnings, all around the globe,
Are lost on fellows built like Job;
Tney know "enough," and, knowing, lose
Advancement, safety, with the news.
The swindler soon on Jaxon called,
And all objection quite forestalled.

He thus went on—"I show you here
Goliath Corn—a sample ear;
'Tis precious, sir, as truth or gold,
This is the only ear unsold;
The kind before was never known,
It grows on bottom, hill or stone;
An acre planted—do not laugh—
Requires of crib room just a half;
I find it takes extremely well,
Just four ears in a state I sell.
To reach you, sir, my pains were great,
Because I thought you up-to-date;
This ear I hold will plant a field,
And six car loads will be the yield;
One crop ten counties will supply,
And it will sell most wondrous high;
I offer you the road to wealth,
And easy life in constant health.
Ten dollars is my price per ear,
But in some things I'm rather queer;
You are progressive and alive,
And so this ear may go for five."
Job gazed until his eyes bulged out,
Like Indian turnips when they sprout,
And took the ear and tried its strength,
And wondered at its size and length,
Till half against his miser will,
At last he paid a hard-earned bill,
And, gloating o'er his magic ear,
Scarce saw the swindler disappear.

The sequel is full sad to tell—
When Jaxon got his ear to shell,
At planting time, he found such creases,
In shelling it fell all in pieces;
And then he saw the monster grew
By rain and shine less than by glue;
It had matured in wintry weather
By parts of ears well joined together,
And what old Job had tho't a whopper
Was patch-work worth not half a copper.
He didn't pine or waste away,
But lived and sweated many a day,

Yet such the force of life-long practice,
That hedges round a life, like cactus,
Naught from this lesson grave he learned,
But sample copies always burned,
Whene'er the man who owned the "Bee"
In honest pity sent them free,
And, tho' he threatened many a licking,
Still swindlers found him ripe for picking.

★ ★ ★

THE FARMER'S WINTER.

Yes, I know some city fellers
Keep a-makin' fun of us,
An' they say when we walk Broadway,
"See! there goes a Granger cuss!"
But I reckon it amounts to
Very little, rightly viewed,
For somehow I think our standard
Ruther gits above the dude.
People have their fav'rite seasons—
Poets fairly dote on Spring,
So do frogs—I ain't pertickler,
One or t'other, which may sing;
Women love the moderate Summer,
'Specially the days o' June,
An' the Autumn stirs some persons
Like an old-time fiddle tune.
But I must confess in some things
I am ruther somewhat queer,
An' I find in solemn winter
My own choicest time of year.
Then the snow's white as a young man
Ever deems his sweetheart's soul,
An' the stars shine at their best, while
Thro' the firmament they roll.
But I am a plain clod-hopper,
An' my theme is soarin' high;
Let me come down to my level,
To the facts much closer by;
Not to Klondike's ice-locked placers,
Where the yeller nuggets shine,
But to something vastly better—
Calm contentment's priceless mine!

Winter is the time of plenty,
When the harvest's in the bin,
An' there ain't much gaunt starvation
To induce the soul to sin.
Yes, they suffer some in cities
In the winter, I've been told,
But then out among the farmers
Charity is not so cold.

With the wheat heaped in the gran'ry,
An' the corn piled in the cribs,
With the smoke-house fairly groanin'
With its sausages an' ribs,
With the popcorn for the children,
An' red apples for the wife—
There's a show down of fruition,
There's a holiday in life.

Sittin' lookin' at the fireplace,
Watchin' of the blaze an' smoke,
Which the elm an' hick'ry sends out,
Gives a man a "heart of oak."
With the stock all warmly shedded,
An' the chores an' milkin' done,
An' the house all warm an' cosy,
Ain't a feller number one?

Banks may bust an' railroads tie up,
Party bosses come to harm,
Long as Winter-time means plenty,
I'm for stickin' to the farm.
When at last I git up yonder,
To St. Peter I shall go,
An' request just forty acres
For potatoes, corn—an' snow!

★ ★ ★

Oh, teamster of the long ago,
Whose whip-lash played a tune,
This season why are most June haws
Inclined to be jejune?

★ ★ ★

Provisions we no more afford
For thankless Spaniard lips,
Though Uncle Sam's prepared to board
Some Spanish battle ships.

THE GRIP.

Did you ever have the grip,
And seem to take a trip,
In a summersaulting ship,
To the boreal pole and on further?
While in bed you had to crawl,
Pepper, icicles and all,
And endeavoring to bawl
Out "murder" you could only sneeze "murther?"
They call it Russian goods,
And it rushes thro' the woods,
Through caps, overcoats and hoods,
And like a quail when a hawk has attacked it;
Ah, to meet that heedless Czar,
I would journey long and far,
Just to plant an ugly scar
On him where Bill Patterson once packed it!
They say quinine's the stuff—
Qui-ten's not half enough,
If to cope with ail so tough
Figures may be said to have a measure;
With a sneeze that tweak's the nose,
And a cough that twists the toes,
And aches that discount Sharkey's blows,
No drug on earth can offer ease or pleasure.
You are rattled in the head,
And you rattle in the bed,
When the horrid chill is fed
By air currents that seem cold and greasy;
From your dinner quite debarred,
By those stomach pains on guard,
Life becomes so pesky hard
That you almost long for dying easy.
I'm a knight now of the grip—
I'd like to let the business slip—
Gad! I dread another trip
To the north pole in my quinine schooner;
Koot-chee! koot-chew! koot-chow!
I am up and going now;
I'll ask Andree why and how
It happened that he wasn't heard of sooner!

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN.

There's a garden, enchanted, with countless parterres,
Where often I've wandered when haunted by cares,
And when my worn spirit for rest has implored,
It has seemed, for a time, like an Eden restored.
Oh, roses are there, so seductive to sight,
A glance gives a thrill of the wildest delight;
And Narcissi, beside a melodious stream,
Gaze into its depths as if lost in a dream—
But it would require half a season to name
The flowers that bloom there, forever the same.
The being whose duty is there to preside,
Is fair as a peri and fond as a bride;
So bewitching her tone, so resistless her smiles,
An anchorite's heart might be touched by her wiles.
Do not ask me her name—it would blush me to tell,
Her presence is rapture, her touch is a spell.
She leads the rapt visitant on by the arm,
And each step only deepens the exquisite charm;
New flowers and fountains still gladden the view,
More perfect in order, more splendid in hue.
The lark and the mocking-bird sing thro' the day,
And the bulbul at night pours his amorous lay,
While still, as by zephyrs the soft air is stirred,
The wind-harp's rich cadence is constantly heard.
O'er that garden hangs gloom not by day or by night,
And yet a strange glamour prevades all the light;
The seeming is real, the real appears
The illusion of eyes that are dimmed by vain tears.
All troubles seem myths and all sorrow a hoax,
Recollection of which bursts of laughter provokes.
One by one are cast off the hard burdens of life,
And existence grows sport, without semblance of strife.
Hope wakes like a madman, and swears to pass o'er
The threatening heights that dismayed him before;
Aspiration, emboldened, points up to the skies,
While reason, alarmed and disconsolate, flies.
Still waxes the spell, still the beautiful guide
Leaves not for a moment the visitor's side,
While with spray and perfume every fountain and flower
Adds intensity to the glad spell of the hour.

Yes, thus have I wandered among those parterres,
Set free from my sorrows divorced from my cares;
The rest of the world—what to me could it mean,
When with this young Hebe I trod such a scene?
I have thought, that whate'er the immortals receive
I'd be losing much pleasure this garden to leave;
But I was but dreaming beneath a weird spell—
Ah, dreaming of bliss at the portals of hell!

My lovely conductress, as onward we strayed,
Manifested more will, yet more kindness displayed,
And led me submissive wherever she would,
Unmindful of evil, forgetful of good.
The gate where I entered, in trouble and doubt,
She never permitted me there to pass out;
But when dull grew my eyes and my steps became slow,
And stolid satiety urged me to go,
An opiate draught, full as potent as deep,
She gave me to fetter volition in sleep.
When I waked—heaven help me! the scene was so
changed,

I believed for a time that my mind was deranged;
My Hebe had vanished; no flowers were in view;
And all objects about me were sombre in hue;
Above a me cypress towered gloomily green,
And nightshade grew near me beside a ravine.
Hope was faint, pride was weak, aspiration was dead,
And tortures ran wildly from my heart to my head.
Remorse, like a vulture, preyed fiercely within—
Ah, proudly its feasts at the triumphs of sin!
No song-bird was near me whose notes I could list,
But vipers crawled round me awfully hissed;
And at times from the bank of that dismal ravine,
A basilisk's baleful, fierce eye could be seen.
How came I there? Ah, I lack wisdom to tell;
Who fathoms the depths of foul witchery's spell?
Whether driven or lured, I but know I was there
In the valley of horrors, in doubt and despair;
For till then, since the opiate potion I drank,
My deeds were forgotten, my life was a blank.
From that valley with terror's mad purpose I fled,
And returned to my home much less living than dead.
Tho' the garden is fair, thro' that valley, alas!
The visitor leaving is destined to pass;
Oh, beware of that garden, ye lovers of joy,
That cyprian Hebe but lures to destroy!

THE EVERMORE.

At tranquil twilight, on my cot reclined,
I gained a respite from vexatious care,
And Fancy's rainbow glowed across my mind,
With rarer hues than ever bloomed in air.
That elfin music childhood loves to hear
Came to my soul as sweetly as of yore,
And half I deemed there was a presence near,
From that fair land we name the Evermore.

A whip-poor-will was in the distance heard,
Bewailing ills that menace every joy;
I heeded not the weird Cassandra bird,
Nor thought of any little earthly Troy.
My spirit was attuned to transient peace,
Caught from the harps upon the mystic shore,
And bade all bitter retrospection cease,
While Past and Present bowed to Evermore.

Hope pointed to the evening star, and said:
"There floats an earnest of the life to be,
The friends departed, whom you mourn as dead,
Live far beyond that blue, isle-jewelled sea.
That dearest classmate of your schooling days,
Whose fate untimely, Themis must deplore,
Has far outgrown all mortal worth and praise,
And walks in glory in the Evermore."

I felt that all the sweetness of this life
Again beyond the viewless tide shall bloom,
While all the care, the horror, and the strife,
Shall sleep with clay relinquished in the tomb.
All sweet associations, broken dreams,
And bright regrets, the future shall restore—
I felt that not one blighting planet beams
Upon that clime we call the Evermore.

I felt of transport more than I can sing,
But oh, 'twas fleeting, as I knew too well!
A fallen angel brushed me with its wing,
And from me passed the rapture of the spell.
From out the Past a horrid ghost arose,
And in its hand a bough of cypress bore—
Then back upon me rushed unnumbered woes,
All alien to the land of Evermore!

ABOUT JIM BILKINS.

Jim Bilkins was a village clerk,
With lots of worry, lots of work;
'Twixt measurin' cloth an' countin' eggs,
He jes was run plumb off his legs.
He was'nt old—scant twenty-five—
An' yet was deader than alive;
He kep' a-wastin' more away,
Until as editors all say,
When they've a poet's piece in mind,
He had "respectfully declined."
He didn't wait for Gray & Brown,
With business zeal to turn him him down,
An' say like skinflints, "We regret
Your hard luck—hope to use you yet;
When you are able for good work,
Come back agin an' be our clerk;"
No, sir, he jes throwed up his job,
An' said with somethin' like a sob,
"It grieves me to give up my plan,
But here you need a better man."

Jim loved a gal whose name was Kate,
An' didn't like to yield to fate;
He hankered for a bran-new deal,
An' clung to life with hooks of steel.
With heavy heart, complexion light,
He went to good old Dr. White,
A "regular" or "volunteer"—
Whichever 'twas don't matter here—
Who pinched him some an' thumped him more,
Had him to sleep, to hear him snore,
Then found enough ails in his chest
To send Tom Sharkey to his rest.
"Jim," he observed, with pompous air,
"You of you of yourself must take good care:
Pneumony of the newest kind
To work on you is now inclined,
An' it will make us twist an' squirm
To save you from the clay an' worm."
Then Dr. White, with Frenchy shrugs,
Quite as mysterious as his drugs,

Proceeded dose and pill to mix,
To keep Jim on this side the Styx,
With penned directions on 'em spread,
None worse that they could not be read.
Jim took the drugs, but health kep' shy,
An' stranger still, he didn't die;
So then he went to Dr. Redd,
An' to him thus that pillbags said,
"Your stomach, man, is killin' you—
I tell you what you'd better do:
Drop coffee cold an' take to tea,
An' still for tonics come to me;
Before the swallows home'ards fly,
I'll have you prime as chicken pie."
Jim hoped an' tried, but growed less strong,
Then called on Dr. Blue ere long,
And that old medic shortly found
For azure tints Jim had him downed,
'Cause he to blues was so resigned,
That indigo would bleach his mind.
Said Dr. Blue, "Your stomach's wrong,
Instead of tea, take coffee strong,
Correct your diet, use my pills,
An' I will soon remove your ills."
Poor Jim! his hopes agin were vain,
An' then the war broke out with Spain;
Altho' a patriot thro' and thro',
He doubted the Red, White and Blue,
As he told neighbors in a joke,
An' couldn't sniff the cannon smoke.

He went to bed at last, a wreck
A fiddler could 'most span his neck;
An' then his friends, the grave to rob,
Called in to see him Dr. Cobb,
A sort of Thomson tinker, who
Went square against Jim's grain, that's true;
"For I have come to doubt," says he
"All parts of doctorin' but the fee."
But Dr. Cobb examined him,
An' blurted out with lots of vim,
"Do you, sir, know how Io died?
Potassium yanked her o'er the tide,

And minerals would do you the same—
Jes thank your lucky stars I came!
Compose yourself, impatience curb,
I'll fix you up with root an' herb."
But, pshaw! it makes a morbid verse,
To tell how Jim kep' gettin' worse,
In spite of gray hairs an' of rules
That appertain to older schools.

Jim kep' his bed and tried to die,
But that gal Kate—she didn't cry,
But kep' a plannin' in the case
To take death's king in with the ace;
She done it, too, ijacks, she did—
Huh! truth from woman can't be hid!
Tho' all her folks showed doubt or wrath,
That gal jes got an Oste'path,
To go one day an' look at Jim,
To see him sink or help him swim.
That feller with new-fangled ways
The sick to heal, the lame to raise,
By takin' friction off or on,
He found Jim's back was kinked, iswan,
An' pullin' here an' rubbin' there,
Soon had him settled in a chair,
And when his ma the dinner got,
He wanted jes to lick the pot!
Before that Oste'path went back,
Jim's mind was on another track,
A-mappin' out a future great,
With sunshine for himself an' Kate;
An' two more treatments done the work,
When he went back a healthy clerk,
To countin' eggs an' loadin' salt
His appetite his biggest fault.
In closin', I may simply state,
That Jim is married now to Kate,
An' he, in spite of Gran'ma's wrath,
May name a boy James Oste'path.

★ ★ ★

Little boy a growing up,
Fret not o'er the future's plan;
You shall drink of honor's cup,
If you simply "be a man."

RETROSPECTION.

When the frogs all scold the mill-pond,
Just because it's not a sea,
And the blue-bird and the robin
Warble out their merry glee,
When the sap goes up the hickory
Till it thinks its bark must part,
Then an old time beat and softness
Comes upon my troubled heart.

How the johnny-jump-up, smiling
At the azure fields above,
Lends a vigor to my pulses,
With the memories of love!
Not the love for show in ball-rooms,
Flirting sanctioned by a ring—
Love that thro' the gate of kisses
Part of paradise can bring!

Not a blossom by the fence rail,
Not a flower in glade or field,
But some tender thought or fancy
To my empty heart can yield.

One recalls a vow at parting,
Broken—broken long ago,
While another seems to whisper,
Truer heart I yet may know.

Every flower to me seems turning
To a blue forget-me-not—
Symbol of a hope or rapture,
That still consecrates some spot.
How the love-songs of the wild birds
Can revive an old-time flame!
Every rippling note seems mingled
With a sweet, remembered name.

Ah, my heart is like an orphan
Musing o'er a cherished tomb,
As I breathe the air of springtime,
Rich with rhapsodies and bloom.
Yet a little tempered pleasure
From its bounty I can win;
Fancy still can catch a flower
Of the past that might have been.

Self's vile shadow long has dwarfed me—
Self and I must stand apart;
Oh, the sweetest, richest sunshine,
Is the sunshine, of the heart.
Birds that sport in grove and meadow,
Flowers that fleck the vale and slope,
Pledge—oh, pledge my days remaining
Happier love and brighter hope!

★ ★ ★

“GOOD-BYE.”

There is a tremor in the tone,
A dimness in the eye,
A solace from the spirit flown,
When old friends say—“good-bye.”
What sadder phrase from any tongue
Evokes a deeper sigh?
Oh, what more mournful notes are sung
Than these—“good-bye, good-bye!”

When parting fills the heart with pain,
And cherished pleasures fly,
We feel they only meet in vain,
Who meet to say—“good-bye.”
Not faltered vow or soulful glance
Can tranquil hope supply,
When lovers part for years, perchance,
And bid a long “good-bye.”

The meaning of that careless phrase
A prophet might defy;
Ah, it is ages, years or days,
We lightly term “good-bye?”
Then call me foolish if you will,
And other whims deny,
But let us part informal still—
I cannot say—“good-bye!”

★ ★ ★

Say, would the better half of man
Be patient and forgiving,
If every moment she could scan
How 'tother half was living?

HER STORY.

So long as memory is mine,
I'll ne'er forget that night
When John came in from town and said,
"Kate, I am going to Dwight!"
Not thunder from a cloudless sky,
Or accents from the dead,
Could startle or surprise me more
Than those six words he said.

I laid the baby's dress aside
In such supreme dismay,
I saw not where the needle went,
And know not to this day.
"Don't be excited, Kate," he said,
"I'm sick of all the past;
They say the longest lanes will turn,
And mine has turned at last."

Half dazed I listened to his words,
I saw no trace of drink,
All was so strange, I seemed to hear,
Without the power to think.
He went on, "Think not I am drunk,
For once I've come home straight,
And down deep in my soul I've sworn
To seek a better fate.

'Long your entreaties were in vain,
And idle were your tears,
But, Kate, to-night before me rise
Ghosts of accusing years.
No charge against the drunkard made
To-night could I refute;
He whom you deemed a husband, soon
Descended to a brute.

'Positions lost and friends estranged,
Long months of want and drink—
I hung suspended over hell,
And you were on the brink!
Ah, Kate the past is all too black
In penitential view;
I'm going at once to Dwight to see
What Keeley's cure will do.

'My last employer offers funds
To send me through the mill,
He'll reinstate me if it cures,
Or bury, should it kill.
The second morrow's morn will find
Me well upon the way,
And sober I'll come back to you,
The babe and little May.'

I did not know how I should feel,
If I should laugh or weep,
Too busy were my thoughts that night
For any rest or sleep.
My mind went back six weary years,
Six years of toil and care,
All darkly touched with blighted hope
And unavailing prayer.

I seemed to breathe the May-time air
Beneath the snow-white plum,
And once more hear John vow reform
In brighter days to come.
He vowed and plead so well, ah, me!
He took my heart by storm—
Like many foolish women, I
Accepted to reform.

The years dragged by, and I could see
That John was growing worse;
What was an an idle habit once,
Had now become a curse.
Want often stared us in the face,
Society grew cold,
There was despair within my heart
It seemed it could not hold.

I once had thought that our first born
Might win him from his sin;
It seemed till little May was born
He waited to begin.
Now she had grown an artless child,
Her earthly years were four,
Yet sober she had seldom seen
Her father pass the door.

I wrestled all the livelong night
With future things and past,
I called up all designing lies
The whiskey ring amassed;
I told myself, "It will not kill,
Nor yet dethrone his mind—
I'll trust it all to God and John
And be, myself, resigned."

He went. 'Twas hard to see him go—
I kissed him through my tears,
And tried to lose the haunted past
In hope of future years.
His drinking chums sometimes passed by
To shake the knowing head,
And air the anti-Keeley hoax,
"He'll come back daft or dead."

John's earliest letter stilled my fears,
And filled with hope my heart,
He wrote, "Already, Kate, I've felt
The demon thirst depart.
This Keeley cure will slay. It killed
The drunkard whom you knew;
A sober man will soon come back
To health, to home and you."

Well, his prediction all came true,
And happiness is mine;
Of his uncertain former self
He brought back scarce a sign.
Our little May beheld the gem
Developed from the clod,
And in her artless way inquired,
"Has papa been with God?"



September is the month of fairs
Where farmer men are trying
To prove by showing peaches, pears,
And corn and wheat, unmixed with tares,
That half their wails of cares and snares
Is merely idle lying.

METHUSELAH'S BAD LUCK.

We're living in the whizzing age
Of telegraph and steam,
And faster print the annal page
Than patriarchs could dream.

Methuselah was in the land
Nine hundred years and more,
But, say, he never had on hand
Half one department store.

When forty score of winters had
Been pinching at his heel,
I'm sure he would have been quite glad
To ride a Ferris wheel;
And when nine hundred summers dried
To strident creaks his tone,
For blues, he gladly might have tried,
A coon-song graphophone.

Ah, me! I fear he never wore
A new Prince Albert coat,
Did business on a nineteenth floor,
Or saw a mugwump vote.
Great Scott! Across his turnip patch,
To him was foreign soil;
He saw no incubator hatch,
Nor heard of Texas oil.

He may have had a Cousin Joe—
Uncertain here I am—
But it's too bad he did not know
Our good old Uncle Sam.
He couldn't take a railroad train,
Nor let a train take him;
And when another shore he'd gain,
He simply had to swim.

I'm sorry for the good old man
Who longest life could boast!
He passed away ere we began
To thrive on quail on toast.
He had some pleasures, I'll allow,
Part of his days were June,
But when we judge the past by now—
Methuselah lived too soon!

AMONG THE STARS.

It was in interstellar space
Two spirits freed met face to face;
They once had loved as man and wife,
But love had died of bitter strife,
And law had cut the bond in twain,
The parson only tied in vain.
They looked, above the Milky Way,
So changed to what they were in clay,
Each gazed in wonder and surprise,
And both inclined to doubt their eyes.

The man had lost his cynic sneer,
Nor in one feature was austere;
Such kindness from his visage beamed,
As little his old self beseeemed.
The woman's change was full as great,
Since passing through the mill of fate;
Tranquillity was in her air,
And no defiance threatened there;
She looked so far removed from earth,
The soul of love and sum of worth.

The silence neither cared to break,
Both feared there must be some mistake;
They gazed and gazed—their tho'ts flew fast,
To when each saw the other last—
Ah, could it be those forms of light
Were once so loathsome to the sight?
The frown that never left that brow,
Where was its sullen shadow now?
Aversion's cold, repellent mien
In either was no longer seen.
That obstinacy that could brook
The gentle tone and pleading look;
That quick resentment with its fire,
To leave in ashes each desire;
That pride that no concession knew,
And faggots on the embers threw—
Of these there was not left a trace
In form, in manner, or in face.

At last the woman smiled—a smile
So free from artfulness and guile—

So like the smile he once had known,
 It waked the man's imploring tone.
 "Oh say, bright spirit! if I view
 The Sarah whom on earth I knew?"
 The woman said with gentle tact—
 What woman that yet ever lacked?—
 "Yes, John, indeed I am the same,
 Tho' Sarah is not now my name;
 Our new names, John—suppose we look
 Them up together in the book;
 I know they, in the angel tongue,
 Are dulcet notes that may be sung.
 You've called me 'Sal' since our divorce—
 You'll call me that no more, of course!"
 Shame blossomed over John's fair cheek
 A moment, ere he tried to speak.
 "Dear Sallie—Sarah—pardon me!
 Whatever your new name may be—
 When we were so beset by care,
 I never dreamed you were so fair;
 On earth I lost so much of bliss,
 Oh, grant me one redeeming kiss!"
 She made reply, "Ah, John, 'tis said
 That here we may not kiss or wed;
 To steal one, you would bear great blame—
 But you have done it—oh, for shame!"
 Here came a voice upon the breeze:
 "Be careful there! old Peter sees;
 A repetition of that sin,
 And here you never will go in:
 At kissing, sir, the line is drawn—
 Do it again and you are gone!
 You should have done such things below,
 A dozen years or more ago."
 All John could do was to desist,
 Tho' only once he had yet kissed.
 And Sarah only said with spite,
 She wished old Peter 'could act right.'
 The two then talked of joys they lost
 Before in Charon's boat they crossed;
 They quite agreed on all the past,
 And not one dark reproach was cast.

Said he, "Before we went to law,
 It was your faults alone I saw;
 But, now I see you free from dross.
 I realize my earthly loss."
 Said she. "John, it is now too late
 To kindle love with perished hate;
 It was our folly, not our crime,
 And fools will be while there is time.
 I thought you were extremely bad
 And knew no virtue that you had;
 For my ideal was a saint,
 And you then wore some earthly paint.
 Oh, John, how different you look
 To when you said I could not cook!
 I thought you were a demon then,
 When you were one of many men."
 John answered, "Sarah, this I know,
 From my experience below;
 Who only looks for faults will find
 A heavy heart and gloomy mind;
 I know it now it is too late—
 Oh, well, it is the common fate.
 God's law observed makes law of man
 An idle threat or useless plan.
 But, Sarah, take my arm once more
 We yet may ramble as of yore!"



A SPRING SONNET.

I have seen an earthly Aidenn
 In the sunset's dying glow;
 I have sighed above the jimson,
 I have wept to hear the crow.
 I have gazed on smiling Cynthia,
 With my heart too full to speak,
 When the rich perfume of polecats
 Softly stole along the creek.
 I have ambled thro' the village,
 Whistling Cupid's sweetest tunes,
 While a false suspender button
 Paralyzed my pantaloons.

I have idolized a maiden—
 Queen of hearts and beauty's trump—
 All angelic—but her bustle,
 Which was like a camel's hump.
 I have loved a nymph with ringlets
 Bought to match her worsted dress—
 Oh, she was a perfect daisy,
 And her pullback was no less.
 Who, that hears the bull-frog warbling
 His melodious roundelay,
 In the calm of April evening,
 When the stars shine far away;
 Who, that sees the tender burdock
 Growing on the sandy hill,
 When the clouds of Spring are pouring
 Down his back an icy rill;
 Who, that sings "Sweet Home" to banish
 Every ling'ring trace of care,
 When a Spring-time cyclone's playing
 With his mansion in the air;
 Who, that sits beneath some willows
 By a limpid, laughing brook,
 Certain that he has a salmon,
 When a craw-fish has his hook,—
 Does not feel a strange sensation
 Take possession of his breast,
 As if fifty festive Junebugs
 Schottisched underneath his vest?
 But, in this delightful season,
 Cupid may be dealt a blow;
 In the Spring my heart was broken—
 Oh, it seems long ago!
 I called on my Dulcinea,
 Hope within my heart elate;
 Long we stood in honied converse
 At her father's garden gate.
 I remarked, "Upon my features
 Trace of time begins to show,
 But you're lovely as at twenty,
 Some half dozen years ago."

Did she kiss me?—Don't you think so;
"Oh most villainous of men!"
She exclaimed, "I'm just sixteen, sir—
Leave me, never come again!"

Truth to me had proved a scorpion
And its sting had reached my heart,
So I turned away, despairing,
And in silence did we part.

She has married a Professor—
Ne'er a college course he took,
But his father knows his letters
And his uncle owns a book.

Let me tell you, Uncle Alfred,
Love is worth its weight in gold,
But it's not all wool in these days,
As it was in days of old.

★ ★ ★

ONE OF THE MARTYRS.

The garland of Freedom is red, white and blue,
Unfading in sunshine and constant in dew,
But all of the hues in its folds deftly wrought
In the fierce mart of battle most dearly were bought;
For the first of these colors—the eloquent red—
The hearts of our heroes have bounded and bled,
For the white—just as pure as the snow of the years—
Our women have coined their brave souls into tears,
For the blue—that soft prefix to landscapes above—
Have thousands loved home so they died of the love!
Oppression dates back to earth's earliest morn,
And Battle itself up in Heaven was born;
Old evils are sullen, reform is but slow,
And nations reach weal thro' the shadow of woe.
Yes, Liberty waits for the call of the brave,
And comes by the desolate home and the grave.
The fiat is blazoned on history's leaf—
All national triumphs are measured in grief.
The graves of the martyrs are found in each clime,
As voiceful as truth and as lasting as time;
Methinks now each whispers thro' daisies or snow;
"Some error died with him who slumbers below;

He battled for light till he fell in the gloom,
And Progress stood resting a time on his tomb."'
The price of achievement is censure and hate,
And manifold dangers encompass the great:
The hand that guides country thro' peril and storm
May beckon the knife to its nurturing form;
The voice which in forum and senate has wrought
May wake foul detractions by resting from thought;
The man who has given his country his all
May prosper in aim, yet in giving may fall.
To stand on the mountain and look down below,
And sigh for the sunshine while girt by the snow,
Is the lot of the man in advance of his age—
Attest it, poor patriot! swear it, poor sage!
Say, Tully! say Socrates! what was your meed?
For the crime of great minds were you not doomed to
 bleed?

Kosciusko, Columbus—all giants of old—
In the annals of triumphs your sorrows are told
The wheel of Ixion's a type of the fate
The loom of perversity weaves for the great.

Now softly, yes, softly! We come to a name,
That wooed the fond zephyrs thro' cloudlands of fame;
It has gone to the East and has gone to the West,
Like a musical tone, it has lodged in the breast;
For freedom a synonym, never a clime,
But with votive remembrance, enduring as time,
Will hail it while Liberty lives on the earth,
A password of honor, an earnest of worth.
Two syllables only we spell it out here,
And patriots, writing, for each drop a tear,
And since it has leaped o'er the cosmical bars—
Ah, how do they letter it, there 'mid the stars?
This Memorial Club is but idle, I ween,
The whole world is keeping his memory green;
Not oceans, or boundaries fruitful of fight,
Can limit the name that we honor to-night;
Wherever men take up the story of man,
The name of our LINCOLN they speak or they scan.
By comparison only may greatness be weighed,
And the mind flies the problem before us dismayed;

He stood all unpatterned, unique and alone,
 His strength is unmeasured, his depth is unknown;
 He rose, from the sphere of the countryman drudge,
 To a stature no man of his era can judge.
 Like some comet, he came in the time of our night,
 His orbit eccentric, intrinsic his light;
 His blaze was propitious athwart the foul gloom
 Of battle-smoke settling o'er ruin and tomb;
 His white soul was true to the nation and right—
 He left us, but 'twas at the passing of night.
 Should some star as far-drifting as Sirius fail,
 Its light down the ages still mankind should hail,
 And even so Lincoln in passing away
 Left on our horizon glad promise of day.
 He whispered to Hope and the mist left her eye;
 To Valor he spoke, and the sword flashed reply;
 On Secession he frowned, but a tear lay below
 The threat of his brow for the fate of the foe;
 He armored for strife in the closet of prayer,
 And dallied with jests while he fought with despair.
 A Franklin in prudence and humor combined,
 A Hamilton in the far reach of his mind,
 This giant who leaned to the lowly and weak
 Was Nature's own jewel and Glory's own freak.
 Some linger too late and some perish too soon—
 He ceased from his labor and rested at noon,
 But it was foreshadowed his evening should show
 A blessing for friend and a pardon for foe.
 Why dwell on his merits? They live in the heart,
 And mock the historian's tinsel and art;
 Mausoleum or cenotaph never can hint—
 Nor can eloquence utter or poesy print—
 The sorrowing love which Columbia knows
 For him, the great statesman in martyr's repose.
 His name and his works thro' all time shall survive,
 He lives in a country thro' him still alive.

Oh, shade of the martyr we honor to-night!
 Look down on us here from the regions of light!
 From the orb of the sainted where now thou dost shine,
 See Lancaster's votive display at thy shrine—
 Not Lancaster's only—the nation, the world—
 Wherever the standard of Freedom's unfurl'd—

By tongue of the speaker or heart of the free,
Is paying to-night its proud homage to thee!
So great were thy deeds and so well are they known,
The world may claim Lincoln, but 'Abe' is our own.
The blue and the gray are forbidden this scene,
But, martyr, we offer thy memory green!

*Read at Lancaster, Mo., on Lincoln Day.

★ ★ ★

WHEN GRANDMA PASSED AWAY.

When Grandma sought the land of shades
At eighty, life's work done,
She faded as the gentian fades
Beneath October's sun.

We even loved the snowy cap
That bound her tresses gray—
Ah, me! it was a sore mishap
When Grandma passed away.

Each child and pet about the place
Well knew her good and kind,
And every wrinkle in her face
Bespoke her gentle mind.
If chiding parents brought a tear,
She smiled us out to play;
A world of sorrow marked the year
When Grandma passed away.

Her tones were tremulous, but rich
With love's celestial note,
And I adored the mending stitch
Her needle gave my coat.
Her eyes were dim, but seemed to see
Beyond the realms of day;
The world was all too dark for me
When Grandma passed away.

Her precepts oft I have rehearsed—
Ah, if I only could
Be more inclined to heed the first:
"Remember to be good!"
She cherished truth and loved the right,
Yet pitied erring clay;
We lost a shining moral light
When Grandma passed away.

The singing birds among the trees
Strange sadness seemed to know,
And when we told the honey-bees,
They hushed their humming low;
The brooklet even ceased to laugh,
And mourned with faithful Tray—
Oh, life was heavier by half
When Grandma passed away.

No sign of agony was seen,
No trace of local pain;
Like summer twilight, all serene,
We saw her powers wane.
Alternate days the doctor came,
And quite three weeks she lay,
But somehow medic skill was lame
When Grandma passed away.

Her doctor he had been for years,
When life and death held truce,
And all our hopes gave way to fears,
When she told him—"No use."
The patient doctor "did his best,"
As men of drugs all say;
And to him went her oaken chest
When Grandma passed away.

She long had said she wanted him
To have that when she died,
And we, who honored every whim,
Of course with that complied.
We knew not what the chest contained,
His service to repay,
But knowledge on that point we gained
When Grandma passed away.

The chest was full of medicine,
And drugs of all degrees;
A note said, "This has helped you win
Some battles with disease!"
She always took the stuff he left—
To that—without delay;
Else we had sooner been bereft
When Grandma passed away.

“Remember to be good!” Her tone
In fancy still I hear,
And of the best I would be known,
In all the healer’s sphere;
And hence an osteopath am I,
Nor quacks nor ills dismay;
I felt my faith in dosing die
When Grandma passed away.

* * *

HIS DYING DREAM.

The air was chill, the night was dark,
It was not long till day;
Alone—alone—and far from friends,
The sleeping drunkard lay.
He could not move—the demon drink
Had chained him fixed and fast,
But o’er degeneration’s waste
His thoughts flew to the past.
He saw a youth with pleasing face,
And kind and trustful heart,
From whose bright eyes a tale of grief
Would make the tear-drops start.
A bird-like spirit in his breast,
Ah, happy was that youth,
Esteemed by old and young alike
For gentleness and truth.
The drunkard saw the youth grow up,
And marked his school-days pass,
By students envied, teachers praised,
The leader of his class.
He knew his purpose and his will,
With fortune strong to cope;
More boldly beat the drunkard’s heart
With his remembered hope.
Fair shone the sun upon his path,
The zephyrs sported mild;
On either side a triumph lured,
Or rosy promise smiled.
The drunkard saw the youth become
The victim of the glass,
For in an hour the mind that dreams
O’er many years can pass.

The drunkard's wandering fancy saw
A maiden very fair;
With eyes that beamed with wealth of soul
And rippling golden hair.
An old-time thrill came o'er his heart,
As exquisite as deep;
The love his waking curse disowned,
He felt once more in sleep.

Once more he stood beneath the thorn,
In that glad month of May;
Once more he clasped a snowy hand,
And said what lovers say.
Again he heard the low, firm words:
"I ne'er can be your wife,
Unless you will abjure the bowl,
And lead a better life."

Again he swore in solemn tone,
With heaven-directed eye,
To her who loved, who loved him well,
To conquer self, or die.
Deluded wretch! he did not deem,
In his imbruted plight,
That he had broken long ago
The oath he dreamed that night.

He did not deem that she who heard
That oath in days gone by,
Remembered still that vanished hope,
With many a tearful sigh.
He did not deem she had resolved
Her hand should still be free,
And only thought of wedded life
As what might never be.

Poor fool! he pictured in his dream
The pleasure and the pride
With which his parents welcomed home
Himself and blushing bride.
Degraded man! he could not know,
While madness urged his brain,
Those parents low in trouble's grave
For many months had lain.

He ceased to dream—he seemed to wake,
But stupor held him still;
A form that breathed, but felt no life,
A power without a will.
Ah, me! for all our false delights
We pay an awful price;
That youth became that wretched man
Thro' the alchemy of vice.

Still lies he there between the rails,
Where heedless sank he down;
The fast express is almost due—
It now is leaving town.
A growing rumble—flash—and shriek—
He rouses—but too late!'
May heaven save all those we love
From such a tragic fate!

★ ★ ★

WHEN ALL MY CASH IS GONE.

It sometimes seems to me like May,
In winter's dreariest hours,
Yet often like December's day,
When round me smile June's flowers;
An eccentricity is this,
Like deeming sunset dawn,
But I'm an alien to this bliss
When all my cash is gone.

With pocket-book well stored, I feel
At home where'er I stay,
And friendship, anxious for my weal,
Strews roses o'er my way;
But, ah! I'm slighted at the ball,
Neglected on the lawn,
By those who "friends" I late did call,
When all my cash is gone.

Inamorata is all smiles,
O'er candies and ice cream,
And not one scornful act reviles
My heart for love's fond dream;
But Cupid, aiding in my case,
Suggests I try at pawn,
If I'd retain my sweetheart's grace
When all my cash is gone.

When I have money, 'Colonels' bow
Each time they pass me by,
And even 'Judges' question how
The times suit such as I;
But ev'n the warmest hand I take
Quite quickly is withdrawn,
To end a cold, indifferent shake,
When all my cash is gone

I know not where the secret leaks
That I have cash or none,
But something in my manner speaks
The truth to every one.
False friends I'm tempted to assail
With pugilistic brawn,
But I would pay the fine in jail
When all my cash is gone.

Ah, what will be the luck of men,
When worlds in ruin crash?
Will fate condemn the pauper then,
And bless the man with cash?
Oh, I shall find out, I suppose,
A worthless blank I've drawn,
And that sly old St. Peter knows
When all my cash is gone!

★ ★ ★

THE BLESSED RAIN.

The rain came down in style,
When long we'd prayed and waited,
But terror seized us while
Anxiety abated;
For such clouds hid the sky,
With such a wind pursuing,
That rails and boards on high,
A Highland fling were doing.

We quite forgot the drouth
To see the hay-stacks tumble,
And e'en the stoic mouth
Could scarce forbear to grumble.
To see the corn go down,
Which people thought was rising,
Made half the Christians frown
And speak in terms surprising.

Yet when our walls would shake,
Or when a bolt fell nigh us,
A second it would make
Us very meek and pious;
But when that blast was gone,
Or died that thunder's rumble,
New courage urged us on
To further fret and grumble.

There is a potent power
In wild, unbounded terror
To call each vanished hour
Up with its sin and error.
Why, e'en Sam Jones could tell
Some tales of late transgression,
If terror's mighty spell
Should prompt him to confession.

Ah, me! man seems so frail
When awful fears have risen,
Earth well might be a jail,
And Paradise a prison!
I'd₂ like to see some saint
Whom storms have never daunted
Nor made his fancy paint
A past by follies haunted.

Dire retrospection cast
Its somber mantle o'er me,
And all my failings passed
In dark array before me;
I thought of every lass
I e'er had called "my honey,"
I_a thought of game and glass
That took my fame and money.

I knew I was profane,
I knew I was a debtor—
My faults were all so plain,
I vowed I would do better;
But when the sky had cleared,
This noble resolution
Within my breast appeared
To suffer diminution.

Now, I would like to know
How many in the county
Who saw the tempest blow
Thanked Heaven for its bounty.
We mortals want so much—
Such profits free of losses
That when for crowns we clutch,
We always get some losses.



PER CONTRA.

Great poets always praise the smile,
And always scold the frown;
To view the two in different style,
I forfeit all renown.

I hold the smile a hypocrite
That often masks a cheat;
The frown—at least I say of it,
Tis void of all deceit.

The Summer, fond enthusiasts laud,
And chase it o'er the earth;
Tho' none may sanction or applaud,
I speak of Winter's worth.
The harvests fair, of Summer fail,
Its cyclones sweep their scope,
But honest winter's northern gale
Holds no illusive hope.

The multitude prefer the plain,
And shun the mountain pass;
Tho' my confession bring disdain,
I am not in their class.

The level is robed in a dream,
And efforts languish there;
The soul is buoyant and supreme
In mountain change and air.

The world is out in quest of ease,
And all that it can lend;
Perchance my views can hardly please,
Still hardships I defend.
Ease steals away the power within,
Inviting slow decay,
But hardship trains that power to win
And points the onward way.

DRAWING THE LINE.

Say, lawyer, I have took the yarn
Fate's wheel spun, fine or coarse,
But Sally's got another wheel,
And that just means divorce!
Now, Sally's been a evrage wife,
Some better, many wuss,
An' mebbe, sometimes, earnt my thanks
When I thought best to cuss.

We have been married twenty years—
She was a purty bride,
An' when I got her, forty chaps
Of envy like to died—
We have been married twenty years,
Our kids are nearly grown,
But Sally's got a wheel that drives
All reason from its throne.

I didn't kick when she begun
To talk on woman's rights,
Nor when to fix up Cuba schemes
She set up late of nights;
I let her raise a mission fund,
An' cook a shabby meal—
But, lawyer, everything is changed
Since she has got that wheel.

I was as meek as Moses, when
To politics she turned,
An' harped on gold an' silver while
The meat an' cabbage burned;
I held my tongue an' wondered what
Was next for her to do—
But, sir, I'm gettin' much too old,
Or Sally's much too "new"

She traded for that pesky bike
Two bedsteads an' a churn,
An' now to ride the tarnal thing
She's learnin' how to learn.
She's gone all day an' half the night;
I know it's time to squeal;
So, lawyer, block out my divorce
An' save me from that wheel.

THE MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

Up the stream of life is an island green,
Above the shoals of sin,
Where each morn is bright and each eve serene—
'Tis an island fair that we all have seen,
It is called the Might Have Been.

Bright as some lost celestial sphere,
Twixt now and never it lies,
And though our vessel may not draw near,
Its wondrous melodies oft we hear
And see its glorious skies.

We ponder and think till hope grows frail,
And till the heart is sore,
That had we but rightly stretched our sail
And bravely weathered dire passion's gale,
Our haven had been that shore.

It might—God knows! But I think the Past
Is leagued with mystery,
And the sullen, deep gloom of doubt is cast
Behind as well as before each mast
On the tide of destiny.

What treasures are there we only surmise,
For no one has trodden its strand;
But we think our youth's lost happiness lies,
Like 'dew on Hermon,' beneath the skies,
Of that vague but beautiful land.

I've a sweetheart there, with a brow like snow,
And voice like a distant lute—
Oh, I would that love like hope might know
Forgetfulness of the long ago,
And be as cold and mute!

But the treasure whose loss I most deplore—
To its loss I'm ne'er resigned—
On this earth will be mine, nevermore;
Ah, can it be on the Might Have Been's shore
Is my childhood's peace of mind?

But folly it is to survey the Past,
When only a myth we see;
While the now is gliding by so fast,
Let us trim our sails for the ocean vast,
Which we name the great To Be!

LYRIC LINES.

The breeze that steals the boughs among
Is whispering memories of thee;
I listen and my heart grows young,
Touched by the music from the tree;
Like accents from a matchless tongue,
The soft, sweet murmurs seem to me.
Oh, let my lips forbear to speak,
If one should question why;
The answer flushes o'er my cheek
And brightens in my eye.

The rose, the pink, the mignonette,
The tender blue forget-me-not,
All call to mind when first we met—
A day in June, a shady spot;
That day I never can forget,
That poured new sunshine o'er my lot.
Oh, let my lips forbear to speak,
If one should question why;
The answer flushes o'er my cheek
And brightens in my eye.

There is no pleasure in the dance,
Tho' mirth and music fill the hall,
If vainly there I seek a glance
That bids old Plato's doctrine fall—
A glance from eyes that can entrance,
And make their presence all in all.
Oh, let my lips forbear to speak,
If one should question why;
The answer flushes o'er my cheek
And brightens in my eye.

Thro' all the day, thro' all the night,
Thou art my musing and my dream—
The only earnest of delight
Of which my fevered heart can deem,
Thy hand alone might guide aright
My craft adown life's narrow stream.
Oh, let my lips forbear to speak,
If one should question why;
The answer flushes o'er my cheek
And brightens in my eye.

The stars that float the ether sea
Afford a thought that proves thee dear,
Shall we in brighter life to be,
Together pass from sphere to sphere?
Ah, Heaven will have no bliss for me,
Unless I feel that thou art near!
Oh, let my lips forbear to speak,
If one should question why;
The answer flushes o'er my cheek
And brightens in my eye.

★ ★ ★

MUSIC'S SPELL.

This morn I saw a flight of swan
Fade slowly in the West,
And sighed to think how they had gone
Like virtues from my breast;
Oh, let a flood of music pour
Upon my soul to-night,
For I am sad—it may restore
A time my lost delight!

Bold be the chords, and deep the spell,
With feeling's fullest flow,
And let the tremored raptures swell
With hopes of long ago!
What sweet persuasion in the air,
What fervor in the song!
My spirit with unspoken prayer
Is growing bold and strong.

Come back bright dreams! come while I feel
The life I knew of yore,
And let contentment's purest weal
Be mine an hour once more!
Like melody from Memnon, now,
My aspirations rise—
Will fail me each redeeming vow
When this deep witchery dies?

A freshness steals upon my heart—
A glow of earthly love;
Ah, tell me, can sweet music's art
Bring rapture from above?

I feel in this enchanted room
 The gladdest breath of May,
 And catch a transport and perfume
 From evenings gone for aye!
 Upon me seems to beam her glance,
 I think to hear her speak,
 And doubt not in this conscious trance
 Old flushes dye my cheek.
 But I, alas! am grown a wretch
 Forgetful of his fate;
 A thousand miles between us stretch
 As cold and far as hate!
 But cease, oh cease to play the air
 She loved in other years;
 It fills her absence with despair;
 Her memory with tears.
 In losing her I lost delight,
 And now must live in vain:
 Baptize my soul no more to-night
 In music's tearful rain!

★ ★ ★

LINES TO A LADY OSTEOPATH.

I got your gracious invitation
 To be there at your graduation,
 But, sooth to say, I had the grip,
 And had to miss the pleasant trip.
 Shake not your head at this excuse,
 Truth, I hold neither light nor loose;
 Had some kind Osteopath that day,
 By rare good fortune come my way,
 And my own head with science shaken,
 The trip I might have undertaken;
 But explanations or regrets
 Ne'er failures mend, nor pay off debts.
 With love of muscle, nerve and suture,
 For you I hope a splendid future,
 And will remind you that success
 Comes "on the freight" not "by express."
 In patience, effort, study, lies
 Achievement of stupendous size;
 No ladder e'er is rightly mounted
 Till one by one the rounds are counted,

And none ascends o'ertopping stairs,
 Who at the bottom step despairs.
 "Room at the top" said Webster—yes,
 The many yield to strain and stress;
 The few go bravely on and up,
 And drink from triumph's royal cup.
 Pray, spare me here a rash conjecture—
 This is no sermon, nor a lecture;—
 But having known you once, I hope
 With fate and rivals you may cope,
 And thinking on life's serious questions,
 I merely offer some suggestions.
 My pen grows dull, my fancies scatter,
 But I'm sincere—I never flatter.
 Should ever meet again, we two,
 The patient, I, the Doctor, you,
 And should heart failure be my ail,
 And Osteopathic treatment fail,
 'Try once the magic of your tone,
 The sweetest I have ever known;
 Should that leave me the same or worse,
 Let some one order round the hearse!

★ ★ ★

JULY.

Ah, gone is bright and blushing June,
 With her enchanting hours,
 Her genial sun and beauteous moon,
 Her magic shine and showers.
 A fonder zephyr wantons by,
 To dally with the leaves on high
 Or stoop to kiss the flowers;
 New sights and sounds tell eye and ear
 July, the matron month is here.
 The lilac that we lost in May,
 The rose in June that died,
 We half forget their loss to-day
 In newer floral pride;
 The holly-hock, the blushing pink,
 The sweet forget-me-not—that link
 Between hearts true and tried—
 All smiling on a sky so blue,
 'Tis strange it colors not the dew!

Lithe billows glide o'er golden grain
And vanish one by one;
Like fancies in an idiot's brain
All aimlessly they run.
The bees like Stoics go and come,
And seem a wild complaint to hum
Against the ardent sun.
So fervent is the noontide glow,
The brooks are still or running low.
Few notes throb on the languid air
From all the feathered throng;
The pleasures of parental care
Supplant the joys of song.
More taciturn has grown the quail,
The whip-poor-will is heard to wail
A deeper grief or wrong.
The martin with its young has gone,
And scolds no more the tardy dawn.
A death of lingering dies the day,
So covetous of time,
As if it fain would stop and stay
With summer's pride and prime;
And welcome is the lovely night,
With inspiration in its light
From many a stellar clime.
Oh, night of summer, quickly fled,
But beauteous, like the early dead!
Methinks the sweetest time to die
Would be some tranquil night,
Ere glad fruition of July
Is touched by Autumn's blight;
To pass from fulness of the Here
To the Hereafter's fuller sphere,
From dawn to perfect light!
I hope the fate will not be mine,
Declining with the year's decline.

★ ★ ★

The minter stamped a woman's head
Upon the earliest dollar;
And woman fair will keep it there,
Or rock the world with choler.

INNOCENCE.

Like the rose and pearl on the brow of morn,
Like the fragrant bloom of May,
Like a hope down deep in the bosom born,
Which the morrow drives away—
Is the angel that bides with us for a time
When few are our cares and years,
In that beautiful, narrow childhood's clime
That borders the vale of tears.

It weaves through our visions, magic gleams,
And wondrously well it paints
On the starry scroll, seraphic dreams,
On the clouds the hope of saints.
It blends in a symphony the notes
Of the summer birds and rills,
And beneath its spell a pæan floats
From the everlasting hills.

It plants a "God bless you" in the eye
Whenever hail fellows meet,
And it stirs the lips with a heart-felt sigh
In cadence with parting feet.
At the grave of a dear one lost, it brings
A sorrow that is not pain,
And it feels in the zephyrs viewless wings
That were given not in vain.

Oh, little of trouble or of care
Will this angel of peace indorse;
It knows not the canker of despair,
Nor the demon of remorse.
It touches the drops of passing grief
With more than the rainbow's glow,
And it comes with a sweet, benign relief
To the darkest haunt of woe.

Ah, my friend, we have known this angel well
But we know it now no more,
And only the touch of Azrael
Can the fellowship restore.
Gone—gone—like the Pleiad sister lost,
To us it will not return,
While our consequential ills exhaust,
And our deathful passions burn.

TO A LOST FRIEND.

Oh, my dear, lost friend! was it forever
That we carelessly said good-bye?
Do I catch from the sobbing gulf of never
All the heart-aches in my sigh?
No it cannot be! let me doubt no longer,
Nor cherish this vain regret;
Let my feeble faith and hope be stronger,
For the stars shall rise, that set.

Friend, my heart held thee a priceless jewel
But one all too lightly worn;
Oh, now to reflect that oft I was cruel,
Is only the more to mourn.

What to us here signifies our treasure,
With all of its blight and mold,
When 'tis by losing we best may measure
The value of hearts of gold?

I look on the leaves so sadly dying
In the groves where we have strayed,
And mine eyes grow dim, while the breeze seems
sighing
For a life early doomed to fade.

Thy well known tones visit me in dreaming
And I feel my heart rejoice,
But more I grieve, when with slumbers seeming
Flies the specter of thy voice.

Oh, my dear lost friend, for my past unkindness
Thy pardon I fain would crave;
It was less my wilfulness, than blindness—
But no pardon is breathed from the grave.
Yet friend, when my mortal bark is driven
To wreck on the reef of No More,
May my spirit hear thine say "Forgiven,"
On the green Hereafter's shore!

* * *

MY BURIAL GROUND.

I've a burial ground, all, all my own,
Where the past wears deepest gloom;
'Tis a solemn spot, but never a stone
Tells its falsehoods o'er a tomb.

There cypress grows, and the dismal yew,
Interlocked by the growth of years,
From the boughs of which drips the morning dew
With the brackishness of tears.

There's enchantment weird, but yet sublime
Pervading its tranquil air,
And full often at the twilight time
Does my fancy wander there.
There's an echo there from broken strings,
A refrain from the years gone by,
And a rustling of mysterious wings,
As soft as a parting sigh.

Oh, I cannot tell—for I do not know—
The number of graves I've made;
But the things I've cherished most lie low
In that damp and dreary shade.
There's a mine of sorrow beneath the sod
That my sighs may never exhaust;
And I read a lecture from every clod
Where I bury my loved and lost.

Hopes akin to dreams of paradise—
Idols of my youthful heart—
Oh, there's never such blue been in the skies
Since I saw those dreams depart;
Some sickened and died in a single day,
Abandoned by weak design,
But some like the summer passed away,
In a slow and sad decline.

I've a sorrow alien to all grief
For those children of heart and brain,
Whose existence was so bright yet brief
In the castles I had in Spain.
Those castles are down, their ruins o'ergrown
With rank, pestiferous weeds,
But I hope to utilize each stone
In paving the way to deeds.

Yet, when smiles the gentle, dying day
On Hesperus, newly crowned,
My fancy loves for a time to stray
In my solemn burial ground;
And thence it comes with a rare perfume,
From a flower that none may see—
A flower of a sweet, unfading bloom,
It is named—Humility.

IXIONS.

Oh, those Ixions of to-day,
To tearful torture firmly bound,
While they are struggling as they may,
Their cruel wheels go round and round!
Ixions on the wheel of love,
Ixions on the wheel of hate,
No rest below, no rest above,
Poor puppets in the mill of fate!

Ixions in the factory found,
Ixions in the private car,
All turning madly round and round
With sudden shock and fitful jar.
You find them here, you find them there,
In every station, every home;
Within their eyes a straining stare,
And on their lips a parching foam.

The wheel of labor, wheel of care—
And there are wheels enough, I know,
For all of us—and wheels to spare—
And each one is a wheel of woe!
They may be high, they may be low,
But firmly to them we are bound,
And as the tedious moments go,
Upon them we go round and round.

We claim a respite thro' the night,
Yet, sleep a mockery often seems,
When fancy takes a troubled flight
And turns a specter wheel in dreams.
The rich man on his wheel of gold,
Looks scorn upon the poor men near,
But if his pangs they might behold,
I doubt if they would mind his sneer.

Oh, let me tell you what I know—
Some sympathy we all might feel
Ev'n for our most relentless foe
If we could see his secret wheel.
Yes, poor Ixions are we all—
It is the lot of human-kind;
And when we climb or when we fall,
A wheel of torture still we find!

TRUE HEARTS.

When Despondency's shadow is dark on the soul,
And fancy, grown morbid, spurns reason's control,
When the past seems a failure, the future a dread,
The present a truce while we bury our dead;
When hope is a Judas whose kisses betray
To the woes of to-morrow the dupes of to-day;
What can make all our troubles seem petty and few,
But the lips warm with smiles and the hearts that are
true?

It is not in fortune, it is not in power,
To garland each moment and jewel each hour;
Unless the glad sunshine some spirit can shed
Falls bright in the gardens or parlors we tread:
Oh, wealth is a wonder, but wealth cannot buy
The rapture, the spell in a fond beaming eye!
What charm is most potent that men ever knew?—
Two eyes bright with love and a heart that is true.

The glitter of fashion, the splendor of art,
Lend little of peace to the desolate heart;
What ever calls to the lone traveler's mind
Anxieties born of the things left behind?
'Tis the essence of pleasure, the spirit of home
Which vainly he seeks, wheresoe'er he may roam.
I tell you what feature most gladdens the view—
The concord of hearts that are kindred and true!

The exile repining upon some wild shore,
To whom the dark billows repeat their, "No more"—
While falls all about him dark solitude's blight,
His conscience grown doubtful of wrong or of right,—
Is there nothing to teach him the tyrant's decree
To happiness is not the lock and the key?
Ah yes, this alone might his spirit renew—
A brow clear of frowns and a heart that is true!

The soldier we name on the list of the slain,
Who exulted to feel that he died not in vain—
What called him from quiet and peace to the war?
Was it gew-gaws of glory he gave his life for?
'Twas nothing so paltry as tinsel of name;
He died for his home, and he cared not for fame—
For the home where he lived or the home where he grew
Endeared by the hearts that were tender and true!

Preach not to me cynic of fraud and of guile,
Of motive that coils like a snake in a smile,
Of beauty that is but a passport to vice,
And honor that blusters but mentions its price:
There is much to ennoble as well as degrade,
For there's always sunshine, where there is a shade.
Ah, my skies may be dreary, but they will seem blue
If near me are hearts that are gentle and true!

★ ★ ★

AT MIDNIGHT.

I woke at midnight, in a haunted gloom,
Where tremors pulsed thro' pestilential air;
To feel the sullen hopelessness of doom,
And struggle with the mania of despair.
I woke to feel a demon dread impart
To every vein an agonized unrest,
While tears unshed lay burning at my heart;
Like fires that sleep in Ætna's treacherous breast.
Oh, that was gloom that never draped the land,
Or hung its heavy pall o'er ocean's wave—
Dark with the horrors on the Yester's strand,
And foul as exhalations from the grave!
A hundred doubts passed wildly thro' my brain,
And cherished dreams lay shattered thick behind;
Each thought was frenzy, hope itself was pain,
In that deep hell of my remorseful mind!
In print, I sought a respite by my lamp,
But still that inward shadow would remain;
My will turned traitor and my brow grew damp,
While Psyche shuddered with vicarious pain.
Down castles crashed, that I had built of late,
A wreck of things that now might never be;—
I strove to trace the ruin all to Fate,
And yet the blame came darkly home to me.
I sighed farewell to every better aim—
Oh, blame me not—my soul was overcast;
I felt my life a desert waste of shame,
And thought the future wedded to the past;
On thro' the tedious hours of wavering night,
My conscience waked to torture and condemn;
And still my spirit famishes for light—
Oh, God! where is the star of Bethlehem!

TO ANGIE.

And I must give thee up? Ah, well!

I will not grow the fool of fate
And vow a hermit cold to dwell,
Sworn womankind to shun and hate.

I will not languish and despair,
Nor lay me in the silent tomb;
Thy fickleness my heart can bear,
Thy cruelty is not my doom.

I loved thee, Angie! I have vowed
My fond affection o'er and o'er;
I loved thee dearly and was proud
That such a love my bosom bore.
'Twas not a school-boy's fleeting dream,
That thrives among a dozen maids—
A sort of dewy morning's beam,
Which, even while it sparkles, fades.

All love is madness—common sense
Beneath the touch of Eros, flies!
With all its hoping and suspense,
What mortal ever yet was wise?
My love had no romantic phase—
Long romance has been dead to me;
But sleepless nights, and restless days
Perchance I've passed since knowing thee.

I did not rave, I did not pule
Nor blend my passion with thy name,
And if my heart has played the fool,
My head some credit still may claim.
Reproaches I have none to cast;
Perhaps (God knows) thou seest aright;
For there was little in the past
To augur for the future light.

Thy charms I never shall forget;
They all and each are half divine;
And, Angie, I have never met
One with an eye that beamed like thine.
When years have worn themselves away,
Thine eye may beam upon my sleep,
And wake me with its fervid ray
To sigh, perchance, but not to weep.

I write no namby-pamby lay
Of withered hope and wild regret;
Still sunshine gilds for me the day,
And life is worth the living yet.
Farewell, then, Angie, fate be kind
And never let thy skies grow dark!
Resigning thee, I have resigned
The magnet of my drifting bark.



FIFTY YEARS AGO.

How wondrous are the changes, Jim,
Since fifty years ago,
When girls wore woolen dresses, Jim,
And boys wore pants of tow;
When shoes were made of calf-skin
And socks of home-spun wool,
And children did a half day's work
Before the hour of school.

The girls took music lessons, Jim,
Upon the spinning wheel,
And practiced late and early, Jim,
On spindle swift and reel;
The boys would ride bare-backed to mill,
A dozen miles or so,
And hurry off before 'twas day
Some fifty years ago.

The people rode to meeting, Jim,
In sleds, instead of sleighs;
And wagons rode as easy, Jim,
As buggies now-a-days.
And oxen answered well for team,
Tho' now they'd be too slow—
The people lived not half so fast
Some fifty years ago.

Yes! everything is different, Jim,
From what it used to be,
For men are always tampering, Jim,
With God's great law you see;
But what on earth we're coming to,
Does anybody know?
For everything is changed so much,
Since fifty years ago.

THE BRAGGART.

It was in June—a sultry day—
When Notus marshalled clouds on high;
To North and West in dark array
They hurried through the troubled sky.
The trees in tired disquietude
Complained of gusts so fondly rude.

The ravished roses' odors failed
In mad embraces of the blast;
The languid lilies even paled,
And pansies trembled as it passed;
The butterflies flew aimless by,
Content a wavering wing to try.

Still denser vapors trailed across
The circle of the shoreless blue;
And still did Notus wildly toss
His banners of an ebon hue;
Till far North-West the Storm King spoke,
And deep his tones in menace broke.

The honey-bee the warning heard,
And fled reluctant from the flower;
All song forsook each merry bird,
And silence saddened thro' its bower:
The sky grew black, the wind died out,
And thunder shook the hills about.

A bumble bee around me flew,
And fiercely tried his mimic roar—
He felt that he could threaten, too;
And doubted if the storm did more.
At last, his harmless bluster spent,
His idle way the boaster went.

I saw him when the rain was o'er—
Half drowned beneath a weed he lay;
And he had lost his braggart roar,
In weak and paralyzed dismay.
No more defiance of the storm
Was swelling in that pigmy form.

I caught a lesson from his plight,
Tho' he was but a bumble bee:
Beware, vain fool! if in your sight
Jove seems another sort of Me—
When self-conceit provokes the blow,
The mangled victim welters low.

THE BLUE AND THE GRAY.

Yes, strew where perished valor sleeps
The tributes of Elysian May;
Tears crystallize, which Freedom weeps,
And turn to bloom o'er votive clay.
Flowers are the pledge of deathless hope,
The prophecy of perfect peace;
Yes, bring them from the plain and slope
And let all factious clamor cease.

Of flowers the dead have little need—
Perchance they wear the asphodel,
But for each manly, noble deed,
The living's gratitude they tell.
Of Gettysburg breathe not a thought,
And name not Chickamauga here;
Enough if each who bravely fought,
May claim a fondly mindful tear.

Let dead dispute proscribe no grave,
Pass by no consecrated mound;
Alike remember all the brave,
Who died deplored if not renowned.
The wisest statesman is but weak,
All nations know a time of storm;
And tears upon the widow's cheek
Trace out the gospel of reform.

Ah, dark and heavy were our woes
While warfare's thunder shook the earth!
But why lament the nation's throes,
If progress justify the birth?
Thro' gloom and pestilence afar,
We wandered on a lonely way,
When Lincoln rose, a morning star,
And perished at the break of day!

Revile no more the Gray and Blue,
Nor vex with homilies on right:
Who knows in God's unerring view
Which is the fairer, noon or night?
Each sacrifice occasion gave
Had love and merit in its sphere;
Then scatter flowers upon each grave—
For foes a sigh—for friends a tear.

The logic of the battle field
Bears upward still the tide of thought;
And when a nation's wounds are healed,
'Tis better for the conflicts fought.
Aye, let this day pledge peace anew,
And brighter Faith and Wisdom grow,
Until the strife of Gray and Blue
Shall seem a dream of long ago.

★ ★ ★

ON LITTLE SILVER.

There lived, in ante-bellum days,
While yet the war cloud was a haze,
In West Virginia mountains, three,
Whom in this picture we shall see.
First Jessie Fetheridge appears,
A woman rare of twenty years;
A most engaging mountain child,
That gladdened nature when she smiled.
Fair was she as a poet's dream,
Yet wilful as an Alpine stream;
Tho' lacking cultivation's arts,
She reigned the queen of rustic hearts;
Her yes and no were strangely blent,
And lovers doubting came and went;
Her eyes like morning on one fell,
While spirit dazzled in their spell;
Theirs was that blue which painters try
In vain to show to mock the sky;
Her mouth the critic could disarm,
With skill to pout and grace to charm,
And from it flowed a wondrous voice,
That made the listener rejoice;
So rich so magic was its tone,
It hinted of the angel zone.
Her features had as classic mold
As e'er Italian chisel told,
So rarely perfect in each part,
They claimed the homage of the heart,
While glowed and kindled o'er the whole
A proud exuberance of soul.
She was a wild rose, mountain born,
A wild rose lacking not the thorn.

Will Biddle owned to twenty-five,
A young man very much alive,
Whose scanty acres did not pay,
Since energy had gone astray.
His fence went down, his debts piled up,
He courted cards and loved the cup;
He trusted less to work than chance,
And reigned the lion of the dance.
Joe Kane was older by a year,
And woodmen held him as a peer;
He was no rustic social swell,
With wit to air and tales to tell.
In marksmanship, and that alone,
His store of modest talents shone;
On Little Silver, light or dark,
None ever beat him at a mark.
He would not gamble, jest or drink,
And cared to talk, far less than think.
His nature was too broadly planned
For mountaineers to understand.

Tho' wide the difference between
Those worthies of the back-woods scene,
Yet they were rivals all the while
For Jessie's most impartial smile.
She favored Will and slighted Joe,
Then laid the former's triumph low,
When Joe through paradise would tread,
And hear sweet nothings that she said.
While Biddle was impulsive, vain,
Inclined to ruin or to reign,
Kane was serene in calm or strife,
And, once he loved, he loved for life.
The tenterhooks of the coquette
The fair Miss Jessie shifted yet,
Till trouble came between the two,
And soon to open hatred grew.
Ere long the fiery Biddle swore
To settle the dispute in gore,
With Southern nerve, in Southern style,
So none the slayer might revile.
At first the proud, capricious maid
Endeavored Biddle to dissuade,
But failing in persuasive tact,
Declared as second she would act.

The challenge duly went to Kane,
Who sought a compromise to gain;
Reluctance not to fear he owed,
But he detested honor's code,
And held that custom could not hide
The stains by wanton murder dyed.
At length opinion made him yield,
Consent to go upon the field,
And date and weapons both declare,
For settling that unique affair.
Fair was the morn, and wild the spot,
A fitting place for murder's plot,
With pines that seemed to reach the sky,
And Little Silver leaping by,
And laughing wildly on its way,
At foolish man and his brief day.
Five stern-faced men are on the scene,
With twenty paces just between;
One wears a look of utmost hate,
One seems resigned to hapless fate;
Each holds a pistol in his hand,
And waits expectant the command.
Ten paces central, yet aside,
Stands she for whom death is defied,
Calm as Minerva, and as proud
As one with royal rights endowed;
Nerved by a passing, maddening whim,
No tremor shakes her voice or limb.
"Men, are you ready?" rang out clear
Upon the mountain atmosphere,
And then while silence settled round,
Portentous, heavy and profound,
The same voice counted, "One, two, three,"
And Kane cried out, "I die, not he!"
Two pistols rang—one ball went straight
To Kane's breast from the hand of hate,
The other was directed high,
A harmless vagrant in the sky.
Kane, falling, cried, "I spare his life,
That you may be his happy wife;
It is not difficult to die
Before my love's approving eye."
She hastened breathless to his side,

And strove to staunch the ebbing tide;
But vain was beauty's touch and spell,
The bullet's work was done too well.
His head upon her knee, he passed
To the unknown so vaguely vast.
As Biddle was approaching, she,
Intense as Juno, stopped him—"See!
The proof of murder you have done!
I had a love, an only one,
And by your hand, here he lies slain—
Go murderer! do not remain,
To call Heaven's wrath upon the place—
Go! I no more will see your face."

★ ★ ★

AT THE BRIDGE.

I stood at evening by a bridge,
That spanned a swift and narrow stream,
Beyond which gently sloped a ridge,
Fair as a landscape painter's dream.
Upon it glowed the mignonette,
The queenly rose and orchis too,
And in perfection's order set,
The rival laurels proudly grew.
Old was the bridge, and seeming frail;
The chilly breeze that wandered by
Seemed whispering a ghostly tale
Of suffering and evil nigh.
I longed to cross: my soul was dark
With shadows from a midnight way—
I deeply longed to cross; but hark!
What did I hear a something say.
"Vain mortal! whither would you go,
With your unwieldy, sordid weight?
Far better live your lease of woe,
Than plunge at once to darker fate!
Think on the cold and cruel stones
The tide beneath you rushes o'er;
Upon them, fool, will lie your bones,
If you attempt to reach yon shore."

The speech closed with a fiendish laugh,
That chilled my vital current's flow;
Those awful tones seemed human, half,
And half demoniac from below!
I felt my languid courage fail,
I turned in frenzy of dismay,
And back I sped me like the gale,
Back to my haunted midnight way.

With Psyche I have talked it o'er,
And mingled tears o'er votive dust,
And we are pledged to heed no more
That mocking demon of mistrust.
'Tis in mistakes to make us wise,
'Tho' shame may long deplore their date,
And every soul that nobly tries,
Finds stepping stones to brighter fate.

* * *

THE GOOD-BYE GUN.

The Isle of Man, on a summer day,
With a steamer out at sea,
And a throng that forced to the pier its way
As rude as a throng can be.
There were bits of fragmentary speech,
There were sobs and sighs galore,
Each mentioned all that he knew to each,
And all were athirst for more.
"They say she can't live over the day,
The craythur so young and sweet,"
"Yes, often like yandher they fade away,
Like posies that pine with heat."
"She's slowin'! she's slowin'!" an old salt cried,
"In a minute the gun will boom!"
The steamer lay motionless on the tide,
An ocean Destiny's loom.
A maiden lay on her dying bed,
A nymph of seventeen years;
Consumption long on her pulse had fed,
In despite of drugs and tears.
Her father was captain of the ship,
And he knew she soon must die—
He had promised on passing on his trip,
To fire a last good-bye.

The ship lay motionless on the tide,
 Then landward rolled the sound;
 Men lifted their hats and women cried
 In a sorrow most profound.
 The captain gazed for a time to land,
 But never a word he said,
 Then the telescope moved with a steady hand
 In the signal, "full ahead."
 Then the stately steamer gathered way,
 And passed to the golden West,
 Like a mighty man that naught may stay,
 When fired by a lofty zest.
 The invalid heard the gun and cried:
 "That's it! The promise he kept!"
 She faintly smiled, then as faintly sighed,
 And in wakeless slumber slept.

* * *

THE DAYS OF SIXTY-ONE.

Long the distant storm had muttered,
 Nearer, nearer, and more loud,
 While we saw away to Southward
 Darker grow the rising cloud.
 Landscapes wore the smile of promise,
 Greeting genial April's sun,
 When the tempest burst upon us
 In the days of Sixty-one.
 Oh, it was a time of tumult
 Followed Sumter's fateful day!
 Consternation mocked at order,
 Reason wrestled with dismay.
 To each man appealed the question:
 Which to follow, which to shun,
 In our sister-hood's rash parting,
 In the days of sixty-one.
 Friendship sighed o'er dark estrangements,
 Even kinship's pledge was vain;
 Brothers went from home as foemen;
 Neighbor was by neighbor slain.
 Rust was feasting on the plowshare,
 Sights were burnished on the gun;
 Arts of peace were half forgotten
 In the days of Sixty-one.

Sophistry and logic thundered,
Eloquence tried all her power;
War was echoed from the pulpit
In devotion's holy hour.
Slaughter is a dread infection
Once it rashly has begun;
Timid mortals grew to heroes
In the days of sixty-one.

Woman lent her ardent spirit
To all man might do and dare,
Plying tireless tongue and needle
While her blossoms pined for care.
Over Gettysburg and Shiloh
Waved the blossoms of Bull Run—
Oh, those pestilential blossoms
Of the days of sixty-one.

Silent stood the grand piano,
All forgotten by the fair,
Save when breathing out defiance
In some stirring martial air.
Old men heeded not afflictions,
Striplings lost their love of fun;
Chaos darkened over system
In the days of sixty-one.

From the gloomy foil of battle,
Valor blazed with constant light;
Virtue shone with fuller brilliance,
Thro' the shades of social night.
Tears and prayers were poured for sweethearts,
Prayers and tears for sire and son;
Grief and death alone seemed certain
In the days of sixty-one.

In a nation's proudest anthems
There are tremors rife with groans;
Freedom's name is traced in crimson,
Progress treads o'er bleaching bones.
New life only comes with anguish,
Joy begins when that is done,
But it was a tearful travail
Thro' the days of sixty-one.

Oh, let bitter by-gones slumber,
Wed not memory to pain—
With the warm hand of forgiveness
Strew the graves of heroes slain!
Every dawn is breaking brighter,
As the days serenely run;
Call no more the moaning phantoms
Of the days of sixty-one!

* * *

COWARD JOE.

We called him a coward ev'rywhere,
Us boys who knowed Joe White;
With his freckled face, an' sandy hair,
He'd ruther run than fight.
If you called him a liar or a fool,
He'd take it just the same;
An' we used to plague him out of school
Because he had no game.
Joe White he liked Mirandy Brown—
That fact wasn't told, but seen;
An' with her he acted like a clown,
So orkard an' so green!
He was eighteen then—The boys liked fun,
"There's Randy's fop!", they'd shout;
An' they got the cripple, Dickey Dunn,
To go an' cut him out.
Joe took it hard, growed thin an' pale,
Tho' nobody heard him sigh;
An' his relish for work appeared to fail,
An' a tear seemed to haunt his eye.
"Joe's got consumption," his mother said,
An' his father thought the same,
But Joe he managed to keep out of bed
If he did not have much game.
Us boys we knowed that his heart was broke,
But no pity did we show,
An' the kindest words of him we spoke—
"Have you heard from Coward Joe"?
Randy liked Joe some, we allus thought,
But she was a girl you see,
An' favor of a girl can best be bought
By a show of bravery.

Then the war came up; the North and South,
 Could no longer hold their hate,
An' to speeches from the cannon's mouth
 They narrowed the old debate.
Us boys went in as first recruits—
 Great Jupiter! so did Joe;
An' we laughed an' yelled, "When Joe White
 shoots,
 A panic will seize the foe!"

We ridiculed Joe in camp and drill,
 We teased him with jeerin' rhyme,
But he bore it all as a coward will—
 Or a man who waits his time.
While marchin' South, in rear or van,
 Joe wore a more martial look;
He'd somehow caught more the air of a man,
 Or the hero of a book.

At Chickamauga our sergeant fell—
 Joe raised the colors high,
An' his tone rung clear as any bell,
 "What, soldiers! afraid to die?"
Overhead the screechin' stray shells burst,
 While the balls went screamin' by,
Joe shoutin', "Hurrah for the Twenty-first!
 He's a coward who will fly!"

A piece of a murderous shell went past,
 Joe's strong right arm was cleft;
An' the good old flag in the dust was cast,
 But he raised it with his left—
The frenzy of battle fired his face—
 'Twas a picture that beat all art.
Next we saw him reel and sink in his place,
 With a ball through his hero heart!

★ ★ ★

Lisper muttered, "any way
 You mutht recognith at oneth,
Lithping's handy any day
 If you want a rhyme for month"

CHRISTMAS JINGLES.

Chris'mus time a drawin' nigh,
Glory like de noonday sun,
Hallelooyer boats go by—
Cook dat turkey good an' done!
All yo' niggahs everwheres
Fix yo'sefs for feast an' fun;
De good wife's smiles,
De sweetheart's wiles,
Stands for turkey good an' done!
Down from Klondike Santa Claus
Totes de good things on de run.
Haint no possum do, for cause
Turkey's better good and done!
All yo' niggahs high and low,
Save yo' dimes an' buy yo' one;
Doan be seduced
By any roost—
Buy yo' bird an' cook him done!

* * *

LOTUS OF THE RHONE.

In the Rhone a lotus grows,
Fair as morn's unsullied beam,
Which, tho' wild the torrent flows,
Bravely floats above the stream:
Strong of fiber, firmly rooted,
There it dreams its shining dream;
Unsubmerged and unpolluted,
By no rise or fall transmuted—
Type of hope it well may seem.
Could our souls a lesson gain
From the lotus of the Rhone—
In this weary world of pain,
On this dreary sea of moan—
How our burdens would be lightened
And what heart-aches would be flown;
How our prospects would be brightened,
And our misty summits heightened
Were that blossom's secret known!

DAYS DEPARTED.

Up an' down old Ellum Creek
Every sunny Sunday fishin',
Lookin' to it all the week—
For them days again I'm wishin'!
Torn of shirt and gallusless,
Down to hard-pan as to breeches,
I had pleasures then, I guess,
Not in reach of Astor's riches.

That was long and long ago,
An' while on the subject thinkin',
Cause my hair ain't teched with snow,
At myself I feel like winkin'.
Time may wibble—wobble some,
Actin' looney-like or crazy,
Movin' on as changes come,
But not like a scamp that's lazy.

Cat an' horny-head an' perch,
They was mostly worth the hookin',
But was all left in the lurch
By the silver-side for lookin';
This un like a cyclone bit,
That un kep' the cork a-bobbin';
And to jerk an' yank out—nit—
Craw-fish had been there a robbin'.

Wanted nothin' but a hook
In them halcyon days departed,
Let the world its finger crook,
Nothin' put me out, down-hearted;
Little could it mean to me,
Crops a-fallin', banks a-bustin',
For my spirit then was free
An' in luck an' life a trustin'.

Round an' round the swimmin' hole
Us young fellers used to huddle;
Stained with mud but white of soul,
Lawzy! 'twas a funny muddle.
On one bank there was a lin'
On the other stood a maple;
Tho' they may have shaded sin,
Truth an' fairness was a staple.

There was Ike who beat the Jews
 When it come to reckless divin';
 There was Bob with congress shoes
 Allus at big pranks contrivin';
 There was John an' Jim an' Sam,
 There was Henry named for Beecher—
 My! that boy's "Jee-roo-sa-lam!"
 Would a-shocked that famous preacher.
 Of them fellers, every one
 Used to shape out his ideal;
 Now no hobby-horse they run,
 For the race to-day is real.
 Each of them has got a wife,
 An' his family's growin' bigger;
 While to work the sum of life
 Every one has changed a figger.
 Yes, I'm wishin', wishin' now
 For that Spaniard's fabled fountain;
 To recall them days, I vow
 I'd turn hermit on a mountain.
 What if Katy calls me "dear,"
 Or Jemimy says I'm "clever"?
 Ain't no sunshine in my year,
 Since them days are gone iorever!

* * *

REMEMBER THE MAINE.

We seek not for glory the battle scene gory,
 Nor conquest nor gain;
 The crime of the ages our valor engages—
 Remember the Maine!
 All plans altruistic, all views optimistic,
 Were met with disdain.
 There must be atonement—tho' follow dethronement—
 Remember the Maine!
 We doubt not the victor—that nation constrictor
 Will struggle in vain;
 For freedom impartial, our forces we marshal—
 Remember the Maine!
 Down, down, then, with Weyler, the age's defiler—
 And idol of Spain!
 For honor and justice the future may trust us—
 Remember the Maine!

CRITIQUE OF "ROBERT ELSMERE".

Dear Captain: my rash promise I fulfill,
With inclination in excess of skill,
And warn you first, my pen has little power
To lend diversion to a leisure hour.
With fancy languid and with muse jejune,
This metric folly shall be ended soon.
Too much I promise—'tis a habit grown,
For which in fret and trouble I atone;
Swift expectation leads my ductile mind,
While lame facility limps far behind;
Hope builds on chance, at steady prudence sneers,
And trusts a fortnight for the work of years.
I thank you for your courtesy: I feel
The book has left what time can hardly steal—
A something of a chastened feeling, caught,
Like star-beams from the solar path of thought.
I am astonished that a man like you
Should care to read my narrow critic's view,
And beg you will forbear to criticise,
For 'tis in candor its chief merit lies.

Well, Robert Elsmere is a work unique,
In which the commonplace we vainly seek;
Strong in construction in conception bold,
A tide of thought by potent skill controlled.
With an abiding pathos it is rife,
But sobs not o'er the common ills of life;
I think its actors strut a stage too high
To call the dimming tear-drops to the eye:
When sympathy one feels, 'tis of the kind
Less conscious in the bosom than the mind.
Penned in the atmosphere of lofty thought,
In purpose daring, with precision wrought,
In its austerity it loses glow,
As sunshine on the peak is chilled by snow.
The book throughout is written rarely well,
Yet largely to the thesis owes its spell:
Æolian harps are sweet to every breeze,
Some hues in any combination please;
And passing touches on one mighty theme
Thrill thro' the deepest thought and fairest dream.

This thirst for immortality we feel—
This dread of future woe, and hope of weal—
What is it, Captain, but the master key
To all man is, or ever yet may be!
This, touched with power and eloquence must wake
The mind to action for the spirit's sake.
Theology, with all its doubt and schism,
Its stolid bigotry and dogmatism,
Has something still to every bosom dear,
Despite the atheist's laugh or skeptic's sneer.
'Tis sad to see denominations fight—
For who can tell which clapperclaws the right?
'Tis sad to see men idolize their creed,
And set the doctrine high above the deed;
But where shall satire aim the mordant pen,
Against the institution or the men?
It seems to me the hardy infidel
Lives out on earth a little lease of hell—
What has agnosticism that may compare
With consolation after earnest prayer?
But pardon me! I do not think to teach—
He first should practice who presumes to preach.
My fancy riots now in rude excess,
I grow diffuse, lose bearings, and digress.

Thro' Robert Elsmere runs a subtle vein
Of metaphysics, tinged with truth and pain—
A speaking likeness of effect and cause—
A strong concordance of events and laws—
In which the heavy gloom of after fate
Is boldly drawn from training and from trait.
So loyal to the wherefore and the why,
It were a pity if the book should die.
If its psychology is overstrained,
And glimpses of false passion are obtained—
If in its law of opposites too much
Of power attaches to the master touch—
If Eros all too fresh and rosy, leaps
From flames antagonism no longer heaps—
Still incident and sequence move along,
In bold procession, resolute and strong,
And human fates and interests abound
In its bewildering flow of thought profound.

Poor Elsmere! let commiseration plead
 For all his weakness—he was tried indeed;
 How sorely, none may say who have not known
 A temp'rament as fevered as his own,
 Felt such a zeal as thrilled his spirit through,
 And burned with all his passion for the true.
 No doubt the "unco guid" would read with scorn,
 But I hold "Doubting Thomases" are born;
 Some minds by system only grow and move
 And fix belief as reason may approve.
 To birth and precept Elsmere something owed
 For much of trial on his chosen road,
 But due to this I think the greater part—
 Subordinating to the head the heart.
 In Oxford mold the seed was found that brought
 Doubt's forth from deep, perplexing thought;
 He felt the waxing spell, but could not shake
 The horror from him, or again awake:
 He died a Theist and it seems to me,
 The rashest skeptic dies as well as he.
 Is it not dangerous Holy Writ to hold
 As partly base alloy and partly gold?
 One imperfection swears to many more,
 And hard is trust, once shaken, to restore.
 I sorrow deeply with his noble wife,
 The steadfast star of his benighted life;
 Tho' wandering further thro' the gloom away,
 Her spirit lent him still its constant ray.
 Strong woman she! that could so bravely bear
 Love anguish grown, hope withered to despair.
 Of all the characters, she only shows
 As much perfume as color of the rose;
 Concerning all the rest it might be said,
 They weaken with nimiety of head.
 The Squire and Langham—grave-yards of the soul!
 Above their types let dark oblivion roll!
 I like the book, with all its drift and fault,
 Admire the courage of its strong assault,
 And make prediction it will live until
 A thousand later works are musty nil.
 Throughout it fine description wakes and warms
 While "airy nothings" take substantial forms.
 One sees the mists come trailing o'er the plain,

Hears thunder speaking, almost feels the rain,
 And knows a drooping, suffocating sense,
 Where grandeur's witchery grows too intense;
 And then its love scenes, Captain—well, I fear,
 They make my heart beat rather fast and queer!
 A stirring genius has Mrs. Ward—
 I wonder if her husband plays the lord?
 To sum up, Cap., the book's not like my verse,
 Which should be better—hardly might be worse.

*Captain H. D'B. Cutler loaned the poet the book several years ago, when it was in the hey day of its popularity. He was surprised to receive the above critique in a few days after the perusal.

* * *

A MEMORY OF WAR-TIME.

Then I was but a child—my mind
 To little trifles was confined;
 To little pleasures in my play,
 That brought sweet slumber after day,
 And little cares I could forget,
 Almost before my cheeks were wet.
 To me the sun was but a light
 That rose to drive away the night—
 I deemed as much of how and why,
 As if it had not blazed on high.
 The wind that dallied round my path,
 The cloud that spoke the thunder's wrath,
 Were then familiar things to me,
 Unguessed at by philosophy.
 No theorems of strife and fate,
 No doubt and reason in debate—
 No doctrines that disturb me now,
 Had thrown their shadows o'er my brow.

One evening, after close of day,
 When sleepy and grown tired of play,
 While sitting by the hearth, I heard
 A sound that all my spirit stirred
 With terror—doubt—I know not what—
 The sharp sound of a distant shot.
 'Twas time of of war—this much I knew—
 When nearest neighbors foemen grew,
 And tales of strife and bloodshed near
 Had often reached my timid ear.

I had inquired, in childish doubt,
What all the trouble was about,
And what the men were slaughtered for,
And had been told, "why, this is war."
This answer did not satisfy,
But was the gist of each reply—
What to the parents is not plain,
The childish question of in vain.
In paling face or altered mien
My apprehensive thoughts were seen,
And one said, to dispel my fear,
"Perchance some man has slain a deer."
Yet was I anxious—something, still,
Asleep or waking, boded ill;
And it was known with early day,
A neighbor on his death-bed lay—
Shot down at home—shot down because
The red war-demon mocks at laws.
A mere contingent of the time—
It was not murder—was not crime!

'Tis strange how schemers make us fools,
Then temper us to brittle tools;
'Tis strange we play that cursed game,
Where thousands die to yield one fame.
I deem, while war's mad bugles bray,
Of flute strains in a coming day;
I deem—it may be sheer caprice—
Of endless, universal peace.

★ ★ ★

HIS LAST RUN.

Along the rails that fateful night,
The engine panted fast;
A sudden roar—a flash of light—
The cannon-ball had passed.
The man who ruled with practiced hand
That rapid mass of power,
Some triumph for the future planned
With every passing hour.

Along that customed, tasking track
 That run his last would be,
 For with his engine driven back,
 The road would set him free.
 He soon would join his wife and child
 On the Pacific slope,
 And there in danger's face he smiled
 In dalliance with Hope.

Yet, while stern duty claimed his mind,
 Each vision quickly fled,
 And as the furlongs leaped behind,
 His eyes were fixed ahead.
 Perchance the perils he had dared
 Threw o'er his thoughts such gloom,
 He wondered that he had not shared
 Some comrade's early doom.

There now remained some hours and miles,
 And they were dwindling fast;
 Soon love on him would lavish smiles
 And danger would be past.
 But, ah! there stood a phantom, pale,
 Between him and his wife,
 And every hard, complaining rail
 Was narrowing his life!

A light ahead—a shock—a jar—
 Loud cries and hissing steam;
 An engine wrecked, a shattered car—
 Dismay and doubt supreme!
 They found him mangled—pinioned fast,
 His sunny hopes all fled;
 Oh, yes! that run has proved his last—
 Next evening he was dead.

Oh, mortal in the field of life,
 Of low or lofty state,
 Beset by perils, plunged in strife,
 Be warned by Arthur's fate!
 Ah, hope is wide, fruition small,
 And fancy's pageants fly;
 And heaviest bolts will sometimes fall
 When storms are nearly by!

BETTER DAYS.

There are better days a-comin'
They are comin' right along;
Brooks with joy will soon be hummin',
Proud to swell the cheerin' song.

All the sky is gettin' brighter,
There is splendor in the haze,
Burdens now are growin' lighter,
Souls are surely turnin' whiter,
Ready for the better days.

Why the sunflower and the gentian
Dream about the happy time,
And remind the bard to mention
It in homely, hopeful rhyme.
Stand up, toiler, bold and fearless,
To the future turn your gaze;
Labor's place will yet be peerless
Honor's eyes will yet be tearless
In the comin' better days!

Hearts are goin' to be truer
In the time now near at hand,
Sighs and heart-aches will be fewer
In the home and in the land.
Frosts may come and keep a-bitin'
Autumns come as fast as Mays;
Heads with snow of time will whiten,
But our lives are bound to brighten
In the cheerful better days.

Souls have learned to strive with passion,
And to profit by the fight,
Mankind soon will have one fashion,
And that fashion's name is right.
Life is goin' to be serener,
Tranquil, bright in all its ways,
Statecraft's goin' to be far cleaner,
Love will temper our demeanor,
In the comin' better days.

★ ★ ★

A soldier, of his dexter limb
In battle was bereft,
And nursed thro' life the Irish whim
That both his legs were left.

RESPICE FINEM.

Methink I saw a youth afloat
Upon a streamlet in a boat,
That glided, 'neath unclouded skies,
Thro' flowers fit for Paradise.
Such soft perfume was in the air,
Ambrosial fruits seemed ripening there,
And vagrant birds, in wanton flight,
Passed o'er like Spirits of Delight;
But best of all the charms arrayed
Creation's skill the youth displayed:
Such lovely face and mien he had,
Perfection's self could little add.
His cares were few, and quick to fly,
And pleasure's heart-fire lit his eye;
The paths of Genius to him known,
Oft o'er his mind shekinahs shone;
The morning star of promise shed
Its luster o'er him and ahead;
Æolian strains the livelong day
Did Hope upon his heart-strings play.
As lost in some ethereal dream,
He floated gently down the stream,
His heart as light, his tho'ts as free
As sportive waves upon the sea.
Some were there who beheld his start,
Yet had no warning to impart;
Perchance they thought his course would be
An idle hour of wayward glee.
And deemed not how their hearts would bleed
To see how far at last 'twould lead.
Alas! the gorgeous morning cloud
Ere eve may be a city's shroud,
And hours that pass on rapture's wing
The demon of Remorse may bring,
And flowers of soft and amorous breath
Contain the elements of death!
The youth had been a pleasing child,
And gracious Favor on him smiled;
For naught of wealth, degree or art
Gains friendship like a noble heart;

And such was his, although a blight
Soon came like frost in autumn night.
O, frosts the deadliest ever felt,
The frosts of vice that never melt!
Smooth o'er the waters did he glide,
And gazed before, nor glanced aside;
He seemed a vision fair to see,
That was invisible to me.
His arms were stretched with prayerful grace,
As if some form he would embrace;
Upon his visage burned the fire
Of fervid hope and fond desire.
Under a spell that swayed his will,
He glided onward, faster still,
Though beauteous maidens, as he passed,
Forget-me-nots around him cast,
And stoic Friendship whispered, "Stay,
Remain with me, nor farther stray."
I saw the stream grow wider still,
I felt the air more damp and chill;
He saw not—felt not but the smart
Of fever burning at his heart—
The fever of persistent vice,
That melts to tears, then turns to ice!
The stream that erewhile rippled light,
With banks of graceful curve and height,
Was now a rapid flood and deep,
Its banks all rugged, high, and steep;
The starry bloom and verdure green
No more in rich profusion seen,
Drear was the landscape and forlorn,
With here a night shade, there a thorn.
The river grew more rough and wide,
As tributaries lent their tide,
And at a bend abrupt before,
The flood turned with a sullen roar:
And here the frowning banks were set
With weeping willows of regret.
He passed these with an inward chill,
But fixed his gaze before him still,
Though now it was a vacant stare,
As if illusion lured it there.

I saw him madly smite his breast,
As if within lurked vague unrest;
And, gazing o'er the rolling tide,
"Lost! Something lost!" he wildly cried.
His little boat still faster sped,
And darker rolled the flood ahead,
The voice of friendship still he heard,
Though wings of censure bore each word;
For friendship that we mortals feel
Must probe the wound it seeks to heal:
But Friendship's warning all in vain,
He heard its censure with disdain.
He scorned the laurels Glory gives,
Despised the life Ambition lives,
But little cared for fleeting Fame,
The phoenix ashes of a name,
And e'en the notes of Eros' lute
Not long his purpose could transmute.
'Twas Pleasure that he ever sought,
'Twas Pleasure shaped his every thought.
Perchance he loved—if love it be
At Beauty's shrine to bend the knee,
To borrow transport from the skies,
And speak with looks, and plead with sighs;
But if he loved, he loved as one
Who hates the race as soon as run,
Or one who 'mid fair flowers may stray,
To pluck the rare, and cast away.
The boat bore on; there came a change
O'er stream and youth most wondrous strange:
The stream became a stormy sea,
With billows raging wild and free;
The youth—to manhood was he grown,
But all his hopes and joys were flown.
Upon his features once so fair,
There burned the hectic flush of care;
The alchemy of wasted years
Had turned his eyes' soft light to tears.
As rudely rocked by billows high,
"Lost! something lost!" I heard him cry,
And then in tones of agony,
These further words come o'er the sea:

"'Tis Ruin's tide—I know it now,
 The dew of death is on my brow!
 'Twas Pleasure that I madly chased
 To this unfathomed, awful waste;
 She foiled me, but I know not where;
 I only know I've found Despair!
 I've sinned and suffered—be it so;
 All waywardness must end in woe.
 O, turn me where I will, I see
 The basilisk of misery!
 Like shadows over ocean's breast,
 Fled all that might have made me blest;
 Far o'er the tide, thro' mists of sin,
 I see the sunny Might Have Been.
 I see—but billows o'er me roll!
 O, God! mine is an awful goal!
 Lost! something lost! it is my soul!"



WALKIN' INTO TOWN.

Yes, I've joined the giddy dancers, an' I've tasted of champagne,
 An' for deep exhilaration I have tried the rail-road train;
 But not one of these brings solace when old Fortune seems to frown,
 Like a new-found panacea—that of walkin' into town.

Nature, safe in folds of sunshine, could defy the north-wind's sting;
 April's wraith was masqueradin', an' we felt its viewless wing.
 From the leafless boughs no song-bird poured its silvery music down,
 But an anthem reached my spirit while we walked on into town.

Not a blue-bell or a daisy helped to weave a vernal spell,
 But I missed them not—beside me walked a fadeless immortelle!
 In her cheeks the pinks o' summer made me feel a rustic clown,
 But I dreamed a dream of Eden as we walked on into town.

There's a city I have heard of—one where the eternal are—
 An' with her I'd like to reach it, be it near or be it far.
 Ah, I have small care for riches, an' I do not crave renown,
 But I will not yield the hope of walkin' with her to that town!

THE ROAD OF BY AND BYE.

Oh, long is the road of By and Bye,
That leads to the town of Never,
And uncounted leagues between it lie
And the land of brisk Endeavor.
It starts in the dreamy Yesterday,
And ends in the vague To-morrow,
And its story is like a poet's lay
Of a hope that sets in sorrow.

By enchanted lakes where the billow sleeps,
By castles like those in Spain,
It creeps to the top of sun-kissed steeps,
Or bends to the daisied plain;
And somnolent music pours its soul
Along the mystical way,
Till energy yields its alert control
To the spell of a fond delay.

'Tis a charming road for the pilgrim's feet,
But its rose lacks not the thorn;
And the brethren whom he there may meet
Are forgetful and forlorn;
For Lethean tide is in the streams
That loiter this way along,
And only in midnight's vacant dreams
Is the wearying pilgrim strong.

As slow as the steps of a tardy dawn
To an anxious watcher's eyes,
Its aimless, meaningless leagues are drawn
Under lazy, tropical skies;
There is no sound or motion of haste,
No programme save that of rest,
Till the soul at last is sick of the waste
Of purpose, courage and zest.

Now, such is the road of By and Bye
That leads to the town of Never,
A far off place where full often die
The hopes of the young and clever.
Altho' it is all a Spanish conceit
Thro' centuries handed down,
Yet daily and hourly some we meet
Thus bound for the self same town.

HEROES.

Not on the battle-field alone,
Where glory writes her law;
Tho' empires vast its pomp have known,
And marked its force with awe,
Are found the heroes of the earth,
Those Titans of their day,
Whose moral strength and human worth
Opinion cannot weigh.

Put Buena Vista out of mind,
Think not of Waterloo;
Their heroes by the thousands lived,
Their laurels jointly grew;
But o'er the world in slums of sin,
Or high estate, are known
Undaunted knights who fight and win
Their victories alone.

Some daring sailor goes to seek
The glorious polar cheat;
The world at large his praise must speak
In parlor and on street;
As grim ambition's pliant tool
He dares the Arctic shore—
The courage of mere lads in school
May often count for more.

Some ruthless conflagration gives
A fireman's valor play;
He nobly saves a life and lives
The hero of the day;
I would not hold his action cheap
Nor dull his laurel's tint,
But thousands show resolve as deep,
Whose names ne'er show in print.

I pledge the heroes all obscure,
The undiscovered knights,
Men of clear sight and purpose sure
Who stand for human rights,
And war with ignorance and vice,
And soul-contracting creeds,
Yet ask nor fame nor pelf as price
Of valiant words and deeds!

The world has heroes one may find
Wherever one may roam,
But none surpasses, to my mind,
The heroes of the home.
The man who schools his heart and nerves
In love of model life,
And by his equipoise deserves
A heroine for his wife!

* * *

THE OTHER SIDE.

Look not on the storm with its midnight form,
But think on the other side;
Overhead is gloom, to the west is bloom
Of the heavens in stellar pride.
Ah, never by shade in a cloud arrayed
Let the hoping heart be defied;
'Tis a law divine, for shadow there's shine,
There is always the other side.

In troubles long day, while the hours delay,
Then think on the other side;
There is recompense still for every ill,
And the sphere of our need is wide.
Tho' trials may throng all our paths along,
Between them blessings abide;
Oft the stormiest night brings fairest light,
There is always the other side.

When the sullen wrong is leagued with the strong,
Think still on the other side;
We are told the right and Eternal Might
For the final weal are allied.
Half our wrongs we cure when we endure
And half are lessons belied,
Every sacrifice has its place and price,
There is always the other side.

Let the snow pile deep and the blizzard sweep,
Think, think on the other side;
Here winter reigns but on Southern plains
Naught of summer is denied.
All our burdens lift, all our visions shift,
When a true faith is applied;
Ah, world-worn soul, beyond is the goal—
There is always the other side.

NEW YEAR'S THOUGHTS.

Calm hour of midnight! isthmus dark
Between the Old Year and the new,
Lone strand where rests the storm-tried barque
While worlds go down, and rise, in view!
What Cortez from the realms of time,
Filled with the longing to explore,
May to thy highest summits climb
And say what truths lie just before?

Grim spot of heart-ache and of hope,
The past and future's neutral ground,
What seer commands a horoscope,
Where thy solemnities abound?
Weird, star-kissed graveyard of the soul,
Hard battle-field of human fate,
What ruthless waves beyond thee roll?
What havens for the weary wait?

Like fireflies in Ægean isles,
The wan stars all their lights may pour,
Yet mark no voyager's hours or miles,
Nor show to him his homing shore.
Oh, time for hoping, yet for tears
Potential influence few ignore,
What mean to us our vanished years,
Or yet may mean those yet in store?

Love looks across the surging seas,
Sad for the living and the dead;
With prayers for those and tears for these,
From hearts that all too much have bled.
Oh, human weakness! in this hour
Too surely comes thy crucial test!
The future mocks thy puny power,
The past defies thee to be blest!

Great Master of the ordered spheres,
That measure out the life of man,
Grant us to grasp as morning clears
More of thy vast and perfect plan;
Grant that Ambition's sordid schemes
Love shall expunge from human fate,
While ninety-seven's fairest dreams
Prove glorious truths in ninety-eight!

THE REGION OF SUCCESS.

Bill Hardtack was a homely youth,—
That was the whole amount;
And all his best friends had to own
He wasn't much account.
At school he never cared to spark
Or even raise a fuss;
Our set just marked him down so queer,
He wasn't one of us.

At eighteen years he couldn't sing
Or more than half way talk;
He couldn't dance or play at pool
Oh, he was quite a gawk.
He somehow struck a railroad job,
A-shoveling section dirt,
And while some loafers went in white
He wore his gingham shirt.

Bill somehow got a lift one day
And went to bossing men;
Before he had been staid and sure
And he was that way then.
Full soon promotion came again,
They put him on a run,
And Bill was making money so
We quit our making fun.

He never stopped to put on style
Or lighten up his load,
His heart was in his work, and that
Was all upon the road.
He rose so fast we scarcely kept
Of him the slightest track,
But he was facing solid schemes
With dollars at his back.

Our ridicule to envy turned,
Bill cared no more for that,
And, hang me! if he swore when we
Called him a plutocrat!
He's up in "high C" on the road,
Close to the president,
And lately to some of us boys
A few short lines he sent.

“The region of Success”, Bill wrote,
“Is timbered, understand,
And he who there would make his home
Himself must clear his land;
There’s nothing men inherit there,
There’s nothing won by luck—
You boys can get all that I have,
The price is push and pluck!”

* * *

A SHADOW ON OLD GLORY.

A shadow on Old Glory rests,
Of accident or crime;
And sorrow fills unnumbered breasts
Throughout Columbia’s clime.
St. Valentine of jocund turn
Had scarce resigned his reign,
When it was ours, alas, to learn
The dark fate of the Maine.
Full thirteen score of men as brave
As ever cleared a deck,
Went down in that unfriendly wave,
Amid that awful wreck;
They knew no rapture of the fight,
They saw no valiant foe,
But there in sullen, secret night
Death laid them doubly low.
They went as Freedom’s devotees
To that ill-omened strand,
Where war with famine and disease
Lays waste a beauteous land;
An anchorage the Spaniard gave,
Their friendship to avow—
Then rose that fate from out the wave—
Oh, Heaven, show us how!
Oh, sailors and marines gone down!
Your loss we sorely feel,
And it may cost the Spanish crown
The Gem of the Antilles.
A shadow on Old Glory rests—
Let time the truth reveal;
We wait with sorrow in our breasts—
And virtue in our steel!

CHRISTMAS IN MISSOURI.

Christmas in Missouri—it is ruther worth the while
Jes to happen round an' see the native graces smile;
Snow upon the landscape—ef it's one that we call white—
Puore as dreams of Heaven that lend Innocence delight;
Crystals gleamin' o'er it like rare jewels—or the eyes
That you tell yourself are brighter than the planets in the skies;
Sleigh-bells with their ripple of a fairy laughter sweet,
Passin' down the highway or a comin' up the street;
Beauty's cheeks a glowin' with the stamp of health and mirth—
Christmas in Missouri is perfection brought to earth!

Christmas in Missouri—let the other fellow rave
Of the spicy breath of Ceylon or the Tiber's turbid wave;
I am from Missouri an' I'm stayin' here to say
We can show a Christmas that is Time's blue ribbon day.
Turkey on the table crowdin' royal pumpkin pie,
Apples, berries an' etcetry all elbowin' nigh:
All the gifts of all the seasons kept by thrifty care,
A-waitin' in the pantry or a temptin' palates there;
Christmas in Missouri—it is all exceedin' fine,
But its main material glory is the hour to dine!

Christmas in Missouri—somehow friendship fills the street,
An' we have a kinder greetin' for those whom we meet;
Business loses tension, envy slacks its sullen stress,
An' we look more into faces than we glance at dress.
An' it sort o' seems that while the happy children shout,
Like October roses our worn hearts will blossom out.
Christmas in Missouri—could it last thro' all the year,
We should rest the preachers with our solar walk career;
But its magic benediction somehow with us stays,
An' we hail an' bless it as a pledge of better days!

★ ★ ★

EVERY DAY 'THANKSGIVIN'.

Here in old Missouri,
Where all good things are immense,
Why call a special jury
For tryin' Providence?
Why follow narrow custom
In thankin' Unseen Powers?
Since every day we trust 'em
Let us thank 'em all our hours.

One day in sad November
Marked out for thankful mood—
It hardly shows an ember
On the hearth of gratitude!
One single day for thankin'
Is the dullest of the year;
I tell you I'm not bankin'
On that leavin' conscience clear.

In some states turkey dressin'
May pass for ample grace,
But Missouri shows a blessin'
All the time in every place.
If more to Heaven owin'
Than many sister states,
It shames us to be showin'
Thanks only on their dates.

Missouri's corn and peaches,
Her apples round and red—
Why every landscape teaches
A thankful heart and head.
Missouri offers livin'
Wherever home smoke curls,
That calls for long 'Thanksgivin'
True as her wives and girls.

★ ★ ★

THE PENALTY OF SUCCESS.

At twenty-one he started out
To fill a useful sphere,
And vowed he would be satisfied
With fifty thousand clear;
He planned, he toiled, he made that sum
By management and pluck;
It came so easy that he felt
He ought to crowd his luck.

A hundred thousand next he fixed
The limit of his greed;
He passed that notch so soon, he thought
It pleasure to succeed.
He set the half a million mark,
But when 'twas snugly piled
He called it criminal to rest
While fortune on him smiled.

In vain for him might statesmen speak
Or prime donne sing;
His mind was centered on the aim
To cross the million string.
He reached it by some clever schemes
That cornered traffic stuff,
And then he said ten million would
Be just about enough.
At sixty now he takes no rest,
Nor ever thinks of ease;
Ten haunting figures cast a shade
O'er everything he sees;
He cares not how the world may wag
So long as he may win—
His life is focused in the wish
To rake a billion in!

★ ★ ★

THE OLD ELM TREE.

It stands like modest beauty there
Within the quiet vale,
Nor proudly lifts its head to dare
The lightning and the gale;
Like humble worth it spreads its shade,
Unfailing thro' the day—
A spot where cares one may evade,
Or muse light griefs away.
I loved it in my childhood—yes!
My love was broader then;
I knew not feeling to repress,
And sneer with grown up men.
Oh, saddest loss of vanished youth—
The ardor then we know:
We taste the brackish springs of truth,
And lose the spirit's glow.
Oft have I lingered in its shade
With plastic stick and knife,
And many a wooden index made
Of my most aimless life.
Ah, then to me the world was square,
The heart or man was true—
Yes, everything was very fair
When I so little knew!

The robin and the gold-finch came
To build their nest each spring;
Before the Autumn they grew tame
And plied no startling wing.
Still to the tree they come each year
And share its cool retreat,
But now to me flit not so near,
Nor are their songs so sweet.

Like some huge weeping-willow's boughs,
Its graceful branches bend—
A mystic sorrow it avows
That time can never mend.
An idle boy, I used to mark
The language of its leaves,
But still to me is wholly dark
The secret why it grieves.

Its very sadness gives it power
To scatter blessings round,
As in affliction's trying hour
New graces may be found.
Full well does it approve the plan
Directed from above—
The same through sorrow teaches man
To pity and to love.

Change I behold in all about—
Alas, how much in me!
But never vandal rage of doubt
Can change that grand old tree.
No longer thro' its arch I gaze,
And deem the angels nigh,
But still, as in the vanished days
It points up to the sky.

Live on old Elm! Live on and on!
No worthier tree may grow;
Live on and greet the perfect dawn
The nations yet shall know.
Dear to me always—doubly dear,
Since one I love loves you—
I would beneath you she could hear
And feel my words were true!

A SUNSET.

'Twas an Autumnal eve— the sun
Low down appeared a world in shame;
The eastern hills seemed blent in one
And fired with sumach's mimic flame.
Gone were the flowers from plain and slope
Voluptuous Summer lately knew,
Tho' still the gentian's eye of hope
Faced in the sky its kindred blue.

Around me lay a land of dreams,
A realm whose only priest was Peace;
Unstained by Roman grandeur's schemes,
Unsullied by the guile of Greece.
A conscious Beauty charmed the scene,
And kindled rapture where she smiled;
Ah, nothing, then, could contravene
Fair Nature's grace to her own child.

The king of day grew redder yet—
A stage scene of a sphere disgraced—
While in me grew a vague regret,
A sense of splendor running waste.
The air was gentle as the dreams
That youth and innocence may share,
A hush had fallen on the streams
And all about was rapt as prayer.

The sun in humid half-eclipse
Sank like an autocrat deposed,
And faithful as Muezzin's lips,
The evening star its light disclosed.
The twilight shades grew thick about,
I felt the passing of the spell,
While some intelligence without
Made sad my soul with its farewell.

'Twas only one of many eyes,
A trite truth from mutation's law,
Yet pathos of ungarnered sheaves
Had charged it with potential awe.
Full often since when twilight shades
Turn all the landscape black or brown,
I think the light of life so fades
When some transcendent hope goes down.

THE HOUSE OF HAVE.

The House of Have was splendor's own
That dreary winter night,
With all the dreams of music's zone,
And all the charms of light.
Ah, wine and wit and song were there,
And the dance's wildering mirth,
And each transported guest could swear
It was a heaven on earth.

The House of Have was desolate
On that balmy night in May;
The only son had tempted fate,
And now in prison lay.
No visitors thronged the stately doors,
Pomp's mockery marked the place,
And the neighbors all, by twos and fours,
Discussed the home's disgrace.

The House of Have was a scene of gloom
On that tranquil summer eve—
Ah, short was the road thence to the tomb,
And sudden the call to grieve!
The son's imprisonment has told
On the mother proud and frail,
And the doctor's skill tho' urged by gold
Has proved of no avail.

The House of Have is a poem in stone,
But I have come to know
Behind its splendor ill is known
Like the brown world under snow.
There's a room for sorrow and for care
And a room for woe and pain—
Alas, that man should build so fair,
Yet build so much in vain!

★ ★ ★

TWILIGHT LAND.

Thro' the summer's glow or the wintry snow,
In the spring or fall-time grand,
Sometimes in our tranquil moods we know
That region allied to the long ago,
The mystical Twilight Land.

Ah, sweet, when the west is a pledge of rest,
And the timid stars are seen,
To feel once again within the breast
The charm in our purest days and best
We caught in that clime serene!

It stretches wide beyond land and tide,
Too vast for a mortal's dream,
Where the solar heart's passion is defied,
And Aldebaran yields his lofty pride,
And Arcturus pales his beam.

Strange is its light—not of starry night,
Nor yet is it born of day;
It is as a radiance of delight,
Which springs from the spirit's inmost might
That subdues the sordid clay.

There are voices heard when the air is stirred
By the landscape's vesper sigh—
Tho' they never again may speak a word,
And cold Reason deems it all absurd,
They revoke the last good-bye.

There's a presence known by the light that shone
From the eyes full bright with soul,
Which are looking back from a sunny zone,
To the mortal explorer all unknown,
In a vague but abiding goal.

There's a fond perfume from a world of bloom,
Beyond earthly flowers confined;
There is little of shadow and less of gloom,
There's a touch of sadness but naught of doom,
To impress the musing mind.

Oh, enchanting time, when that viewless clime
Restores half the grace of youth;
When thoughts of the Deity glow sublime,
With the stars set to majestic rhyme,
In the lyric of love and truth!

When life's skies grow gray in the evening ray,
May the breezes all be bland,
And may Innocence cheer the world worn clay,
And Faith discern an undoubted way
On over the Twilight Land.

JOHN SMITH, POPULIST.

He is no legendary myth
But lived and farmed as plain John Smith.
John Smiths there are, both great and small
From Ypsilanti to Bengal;
John Smiths in office, likewise out,
John Smiths with millions, rags, and gout;
John Smiths with dullness and acumen,
But all John Smiths are strictly human.
Now, our John Smith was not a hero,
Tho' much above the moral zero;
He paid his debts and preacher too,
Thanked Heaven for sunshine, rain or dew,
And when grasshoppers or the drought
Seemed turning Kansas wrong side out,
He didn't raise the wail of ruin,
But said, "God knows what he is doin!"
The hot winds came to scorch his crop,
His spring refused to yield a drop;
He witnessed Prohibition fail,
While neighbors suffered from "hop ale,"
He saw John Ingalls lose his job,
And heard him for the poor man sob;
He sat at Simpson's biggest shows,
With tearless cheek and Stoic nose;
He met adventurers and riskers
With shortest eyes and longest whiskers,
Who told him every thing was wrong,
And begged that he would join the throng;
But tho' by Populism thus hemmed,
He could not hold all things condemned.
His favorite cow lay down and died,
No party whip came from the hide;
His hired hand broke more tools than ground,
In that no statesman's guilt was found;
His wheat came up one fall too thin,
He charged not Congress with that sin;
And when his back with ache was bent,
He didn't "cuss" the President;
He joined no razzle-dazzle school
To change all climate law and rule,

But tried to tone down chance and blunder,
By pushing on his work like thunder;
Saying, "Bad luck comes, I don't know why—
Things may git better by and bye;
I failed to help at the Creation
An' now it's late for condemnation."
Thus John Smith argued unto those
Who viewed the plutocrats as foes;
And tho' each neighbor was a picket,
He voted, still, the same old ticket.
But small things have tremendous weight,
When wrought into the web of fate,
And now my muse must sadly tell
How at the last our farmer fell.
'Twas Autumn evening—in the corn
John Smith had worked since early morn—
A shocking task, as all must know
Who e'er have cut a hill or row.
The heat was ninety in the shade,
And there was fire in ear and blade;
He counted for each shock he set,
Just equal pounds of corn and sweat.
The sun seemed standing in the West,
And Smith concluded he must rest;
But hardly had he found the shade,
All irritated, rasped and flayed,
When big mosquitoes by the score
Came round him thirsting for his gore.
He suffered the initial bites,
Then yelled, "Cuss all the parasites!
From Rothschild down to flies and gnats,
They all are tarnal Plutocrats!"
Then while his features donned a scowl
He raised calamity's own howl.
Thus while mosquitoes sang and preyed
John Smith a Populist was made.

✦ ✦ ✦

"Life's joys are for the millions", says
A writer wise and funny,
But, hang it! does he speak of men,
Or does he speak of money?

KLONDIKE ECHOES.

“Gold” said he gloomily, “nothing but gold,
Gold, till its color seems flouting the sky;
What may it weigh against hunger and cold,
Here in this region with nothing to buy?
Gold in my claim, in my pockets and cot,
Nuggets to tempt a proud monarch to roam;
Give to me rather a penniless lot,
Rich with the comforts of far-away home.”

“Gold,” sighed another, “bright gold in my dreams,
Dust of the gold in my whiskers and hair,
Piles of it such as dull avarice deems
Drive away longing and trouble and care;
Living and dying on nothing but gold,
Terrible is the fell jaundice of wealth;
Gladly I’d give all the washings I hold,
Once more to know the blithe pulses of health.”

“Gold,” said a third one, “blind puppet of fate,
Loses its usefulness in its excess;
Here have I labored both early and late,
Homesick and hounded by hunger’s distress:
Luck was against me, however, and while
Some men made fabulous earnings each hour,
Starving I am for the lack of a pile
Worth a lean dinner of bacon and flour.”

“Gold,” said a fourth voice, “is Folly’s own fool,
Drunken, delirious over success;
Well has this lesson in Klondike’s stern school
Taught me to trust it and value it less.
Song-birds of summer—a sweet-heart’s bright eyes—
Raptures of home in the south—we have lost;
Small, very small, seems the lucky man’s prize,
Weighed with the toil and the hardship it cost.”

★ ★ ★

KIPLING.

Thou, Kipling, monarch on a throne
Wherever English speech prevails;
Claimed by two nations as their own,
For magic verse and wizard tales!

With tearful eyes we read thy lot,
Thy health restored, thy daughter dead,
Like sunrise on the ruined spot
Which late the cyclone's fury fed.

Slow struggling back to consciousness,
Back from the fever's haunted realm,
Freed from thy physical distress,
To face a loss to overwhelm—
Oh, Kipling, all the nations pray
Thy moral insight shall endure,
And trust and faith more light the way
Than Spartan spell or Stoic cure.

What means to thee the peerage now,
Thou peer of realms of intellect?
What means all critics may avow,
Or all the Kaiser sends direct?
As mountain summits clad in snow,
Warm not with sunshine o'er them poured,
The loss which thou art called to know
Is lessened not tho' world deplored.

The praise of worlds could not supply
The solace with thy darling gone,
For something of us, low or high,
Goes with a loved one passing on.
We may not judge what is, or was,
We may not deem fate right or wrong;
If Heaven another angel has,
Earth ev'n may have a sweeter song.



ODE TO THE CZAR.

How shall we style you, Autocrat?
Our Yankee term must ripen quick;
I've half a mind to tell you that
We call you Old—or Younger Nick!
Familiar speech we hold our right,
Court manners merely tickle us;
I have not leisure now in sight
To call you Nicholas.

Colossus in a mere man's suit,
Your coat perchance a "40" numbered,
While great occasions calmly slumbered,
Why should your majesty take root
And mock the world with Dead Sea fruit?
Ah, Nick, your conference at the Hague
With wide report, proceedings vague—
Was it to spread or check a plague,
To fool or favor nations?

Forgive me, but we've learned to doubt
The tricks that Royalty's about
In judging demonstrations.

Japan's not easy in her chair,
Because the big tracks of your Bear
Throughout the East show here and there,
And all toe toward dominion;
France knows not whether that "alliance"
Means ready aid or quick defiance—
Say, Nick, of diplomatic science
You air a strange opinion.

You had your conference, and then,
When scarce its views were written,
The carnage opened up again,
Between the Boer and Briton;
The Mexican and his tawnier brother
To-day are shooting one another,
While where our Yankee troops go gunning
To tame the sullen cousin,
The Tagal government keeps running
Like sixty plus a dozen.

The chiefs and races are not docile,
War's thunders echo still;
Your will brings not, great Peace Apostle,
Peace and good will.

Their hate let hardened breeds keep showing,
The same you need not answer for;
But, Nick, why keep your navy growing,
Unless you think of war?
The irenarch lost in the Czar,
You play not chess or Keno;
But seem, while placing troops afar,
To scent a Borodino.

I flatter not, sir—to a Yankee
You monarchs look quite cold and cranky!
 Nick, you owe restitution great,
 For helpless Poland's tearful fate—
 The crime was done before your date,
 But then for good 'tis ne'er too late,
The hour is what we make it;
 Alas, you go imperious ways,
 Lost in a dream of glorious days
 And when you want more land or praise,
March out and take it!

Ah Nick, make some use of your might,
Correct your aims, expand your sight,
 And still find time to teach
Each Muscovite he must go right
 The highest good to reach.
Leave theories to vagrants' dreams,
 They sow the world with cactus;
And in the field where progress beams
 Apply the hand of practice.

Ours is no visionary age,
The earth is not a player's stage,
 For figures weak and waxen;
Your power is vast, your nation great,
Yet you can not ignore the gait
 That moves the Anglo-Saxon.
In world-power you've a dual rival
And for the fittest there's survival;
 Watch closely Empire's growing star,
Beneath it you will find us,
 And drop your Julian calendar—
All "old styles" fall behind us.

We Yankees wish your pathway clear,
And do not own a foolish fear
 That you in tears will pickle us,
But now, in Western phrase, "so long"—
You're mighty for both right and wrong,
Yet you must heed this little song,
 Or never be St. Nicholas!

WHEN DEWEY COMES HOME.

When Dewey comes home, over wave and foam,
From Mani'la many leagues away
We'll remember the Maine, in a way that's plain
And that glorious First of May!
No prodigal he, far over the sea,
Yet the fatted calf must be slain;
We'll open our hearts to the man of parts
Who opened the eyes of Spain!

When Dewey comes home—not ancient Rome,
In her proudest, palmiest hour,
Had honors of state for her victors great
To rival those we will shower.
Her heroes went out to dispel all doubt
Of the pagan merit of might,
But Dewey—his ships, with their cannon lips,
Pleaded only the cause of right.

When Dewey comes home, it would fill a tome
Of wonderful depth and spread,
To record in part what Columbia's heart
Will cause to be sung and said.
Let Perry still rank with the greatest, and thank
The fates for our Farragut's fame,
But Dewey's as great, and we shall not wait
Till he dies to herald his name.

When Dewey comes home, from pillar and dome
Fame's temple with splendor will shine,
While for unspilled gore triumphant we pour
Our praise with the blood of the vine.
A wizard in war, who yet can abhor
Politicians with axes to grind—
When Dewey comes home we will beat the drum
And hail him the one of his kind.

★ ★ ★

LINES.

Again McKinley towers above
The captious critic's sneer,
And stands revealed by filial love
To all the nation dear.
Oh, let the message true be sent
As fast as speech can go;
The people love a President
Who loved a mother so.

Historic Canton viewed the scene,
Inhaling anxious breath;
The country wore a saddened mien,
Beneath the spell of death.
There is a mourner for each heart
That yields to mortal fate,
But tears from countless eyes must start
When sorrow smites the great.

To this event let fiction bow,
And own a blank domain;
The world has seen affection, now,
No facile pen can feign.
The mother, bowed with many years
Yet armed with patience rare;
He had for her a child's quick tears,
A son's unflinching care.

Surrounded by affairs of state,
And true to duty's call,
That distant mother's pending fate
He heeded most of all.
'Twas well. For that departing soul
Had known the art to lead,
And taught the youth that self control
Which helped the man succeed

Not vanity of place and power
Nor adulation's spell,
Made him unmindful for an hour
Of her he loved so well.
The old home instinct of his youth
His loyal spirit felt;
He proved affection's grandest truth
While by her bed he knelt.

His is a consolation rare
The sense of duty done;
A nation's honor let him share
With praise already won.
Go not for gleams of primal grace
To olden Greece or Rome;
Columbia cites the touching case
Within that Canton home.

IGNORANCE.

We walk in the gloom and dejection of night,
We dream of the morning and pray for the light;
We eulogize poets who sing of the day,
And trust to our statesmen to point us the way;
But still we go onward thro' folly and strife,
To lose in the grave all the nightmare of life.
Our peace—what was it but the trust of our youth,
Ere we drank to the dregs of the hemlock of truth?
Our hopes—what were they but the heart's virgin
bloom,

Despoiled by our winter of tint and perfume?
Our knowledge—ah, what is our knowledge but doubt,
Like an echo that answers a wildering shout?
We wander with science, it matters not where,
To read but the legends and screed of despair;
The heights of the land and the depths of the sea
Have secrets locked in them which yield to no key;
And reason's proud theories only avail
To spice with true pathos a dubious tale.
From ignorance, sorrows and sins have their birth—
Fell shade of old chaos left dark on the earth!
It is ruthless as fate and impatient as time,
The nurse of remorse and the parent of crime!
Oh, sages! who strive at the cosmical bars,
To grasp all the secrets lodged high in the stars,
Confine false ambition's mad hunger and heat,
And look to the mysteries under your feet!
Vainly wise, wisely vain, just remember your sense
But confounds the great problem of whither and whence
King Alfred compared, while his courtiers all heard,
The fever called life to the flight of a bird;
At a window from darkness it enters a room,
And soon at another goes out into gloom;
In vain we would stay it with smile or with tear,
And all that we know of it is, it was here!

Young innocence comes with its beautiful smile,
To wander in happiness perfect a while,
But ignorance lurks like a fate in its path,
A demiurge fired by destruction's own wrath.
It may drink of the dew balm of Hermon at morn,
But the rose of the noontide possesses its thorn;

The mountain brook's anthem is joyous and free,
 But soon it is lost in the dirge of the sea;
 The spirit of childhood is buoyant and pure,
 But the pledge of its pain is to live and endure.
 'Twas said, once, we die by a weakness of will—
 Is fortitude, then, but an earnest of ill?
 Oh, Stoic, is Azrael's touch a relief
 From a bondage of sin and a burden of grief?
 That school-mate I loved as a brother of mine,
 Whose talents, I deemed, a shekinah might shine—
 Who drank at the desert's salt springlets of lore,
 And fevered and fretted and famished for more—
 Ah, was the heart hunger he left me to feel
 A blindness too stolid to measure his weal?
 Oh, fates of the future! I ask was his grave
 A dungeon to doom—or asylum to save?
 In dreams his tones throb o'er the gulf of the years,
 And my sighs are a doubt between smiling and tears.
 The star-dust of wisdom we clutch at in vain,
 The fountains of truth are all bitter with pain;
 Disappointment is eager and knowledge is coy;
 And experience chars while assaying our joy.
 We blindly sit weaving at Destiny's loom,
 Doubt sighs o'er the cradle and sobs at the tomb.
 Shall we fail to four-score—shall our seasons be brief?
 What seer may interpret our sibylline leaf?
 Astræa! Astræa! could we know to-day
 How much in the scales of existence we weigh,
 Introspection, the vulture, might fly from the heart,
 And leave a new courage in each for his part!
 What is wrong? What is right? Oh, fully to know
 The paths wherein duty unyielding should go—
 To comprehend Nature's most intricate plan,
 And fathom the problem of duty to man—
 To hunt each iniquity back to its source,
 And know it is willful or harbored perforce—
 The cry of the fallen to hear and to heed,
 And exchange for reproof the benevolent deed!

The Neroes, the Herods—ah, think you their guilt
 Was born of a thirst for the blood that they spilt—
 Or was it from frowardness fed by despair,
 That scarred the heart ignorance doomed it to bear?

One mis-step in life—one mis-step in the dark
 Forever may drive the blithe dove from the ark;
 We may wail for lost peace, for assistance may grope,
 But the desolate waves moan a dirge for our hope.
 From the ashes of passion a Phœnix of pain
 Must rise to gaze torture deep into the brain;
 And passion is ignorance savage and fierce,
 Unmindful of bosoms its arrows may pierce.
 The curse of all sequence lies in the occult,
 The act is a doubt—and a fate its result.
 As backward I gaze on the course of my years,
 An eidolon of mystery darkly appears;
 It holds in its hideous hands a huge scroll,
 But I read not the sentence thereon of my soul;
 I know it is charged with the thunders of doom,
 But my vision fails in the Plutonian gloom.
 Example and precept—I know they have wrought
 An influence vast upon purpose and thought;
 But how much do I owe to the Parcæ of birth
 Of the earthiness pressing me low to the earth?
 Ye orbs that did battle with Sisera! still
 Is starlight a blight on the frail human will?
 Who but feels with the shadow of doubt on his eyes,
 He were perfectly blest, were he perfectly wise?
 Fell ignorance! incubus lasting as life!
 Back, back to thy night with thy horrors and strife!
 So long have the heralds been shouting of day—
 Ah, is it not time for the morning's first ray?
 How long must we watch yet, how long must we wait
 For Wisdom to enter the orient gate
 And scatter upon us her glad smiles of peace,
 Till troubling and erring forever shall cease?
 Some idols have left not a relic or wraith,
 Where millions once zealously centered their faith;
 Some shrines are unhallowed and low in the dust,
 Where nations have pointed in fullness of trust;
 But still the iconoclast's hammer beats on,
 While fanes are arising where temples are gone.
 Osiris and Isis have passed from their shore,
 While Memnon salutes the bright morning no more;
 The plains of Valhalla have faded to naught,
 Save the shade of a vague but a beauteous thought;

Al Sirat is a tottering type of decay,
 Tho' the Moslem still turns him to Mecca to pray.
 Times change and creeds alter, and ruins abound,
 But the desideratum has not yet been found.
 Our pulpits are factious and prone to abuse,
 And envy and malice creep into the pews;
 But charity murmurs in impotent grief,
 That knowledge would quell the vain strife of befile.
 Ah, Sphinx of the Ages, the world shall know yet!
 Reveal to us when the dim planets have set,
 While rises in splendor the source of their light
 To usher the era of justice and right,
 When ignorance like a lost spirit shall haste
 To regions of ruin and darkness and waste!

★ ★ ★

THE LOFTY.

The ancient elm was proudly high
 Above the landscape's verdant sweep,
 Inviting clouds that sailed the sky
 Among its boughs to wait and sleep;
 It pointed to the shoreless blue
 In native majesty arrayed,
 But, ah! its leaves were thin and few,
 No weary pilgrim blessed its shade.
 The monarch mountain lifts its crown
 Above the din and strife of man,
 The mightiest period handed down
 To punctuate Creation's plan;
 Upon it lies eternal snow
 As white as Winter's morning vest,
 But there nor fruit nor flowers may grow,
 No dauntless eagle builds its nest.
 The statesman o'er his fellow men
 Like some proud, fabled Titan stood;
 He labored long with voice and pen,
 The meed he sought, his country's good;
 His deeds in fadeless annal live,
 And millions praise him all the while—
 Alas! he knew not how to give
 To charity—on want to smile.

'Tis something to be lofty, yet
The upper air is ever cold,
And in my heart is no regret
Because a humble sphere I hold.
Be mine the lot, in storm or shine,
In fortunes glare or gentle shower,
To know the graces that refine
And feed Humility's own flower.

★ †

RECOMPENSE.

When clouds come like blushes o'er the sky,
Beneath the fond kiss of May,
And the gems of the wood-land hush our steps
As in musing mood we stray;
When the earth smiles its resurrection dream
To the glorious orbs above,
And the song of birds, and the sigh of trees,
And the pulse of man is love—
Then dear Nature doffs the sign of years,
And seems a voluptuous girl,
The while, with a Cleopatra's grace,
She drinks down the wine and pearl!
Ah, who at this season of the year
Could return to his brother clod,
Uncomplaining and resigned, ev'n tho',
Like Enoch, he walked with God?
If there were no bitter with all the sweet,
With all the hope no despair,
Why the season unalloyed would seem and bright
As the fadeless clime Up There!
If there were no fardels of grief and toil
In the Spring-time, to mar our bliss,
We would turn from the hope of the future life
To a selfish view of this.

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Thank Heaven for those long house-cleaning days
And their ministry of distress,
When home is a sheol and the wife is queen
Tho', perhaps, not a good Queen Bess!
Thank Heaven, yes, thank it again and again,
For its plans are never unwise—
While the good wife manages mop and broom,
To the woods the husband flies!

DEAD HEARTS.

Oh, vain are the fragrance and rapture of May
To hearts that forestall the transition to clay;
The pulse may be throbbing, and lips may be red,
But life is not living when feeling is dead.
The orphans of heart, are the heirs of a doom
More awful than all that we deem of the tomb;
Their years are an irony only of life—
No pride for the triumph, no strength for the strife—
The midnight of apathy shadows their day—
The victims of self and the food of decay;
Despair makes a menace and torture of breath,
And dying is all they have felt not of death.
Ah, passion is honeydew potent to blight,
And anguish is found in the quest for delight;
The warning is written—to late it is read
The heart that once reveled is haunting and dead.
As suns by their splendor at last must consume,
And leave all about them confusion and gloom,
So hearts that too ardently struggle and beat,
Leave ruin and ashes of passionate heat.
Life is a strange fabric of startling extremes,
And rudest awakenings mar happiest dreams.
The orphans of heart—like old castles are they,
Where legends say specters are leagued with decay;
And specters more real are thronging within
Than ever were doomed to disquiet for sin.
Dead hopes and dead loves—aspirations disowned
Ambitions perverted, old idols dethroned—
Assertion a maniac, raving of woe—
Negation that libels success with its “no”—
Ah, never had romance a crime driven ghost
So real—so awful as each of this host!
Dead hearts are dark secrets, lips rarely confess,
But life is too artless to mask their distress;
Appearance may swear in impeachment of truth,
And manner and converse be copied from youth,
The cheek in the festal hall may not be wet—
But their thought in despair, and their life is regret.
Like spice gales in deserts—like roses in snow,
Their smiles for a time may seem cheating their woe;

But follow them back to their solitude now,
And fathom those secrets that gloom on the brow—
The secret that self is a tyrant to hate,
When vice has assumed the propōrtions of Fate.
The secret that dark introspection can find
In hearts that are dead, a deep hell for the mind!

★ ★ ★

THE KNIGHTS OF THE PRESS.

Oh, talk of the paladins famous in story
And talk of the valor and feats of your peers;
But there is another broad highway to glory,
Where never the sunshine is caught by their spears.
When chivalry, weary and honor-bound, halted,
And owned that its zeal had induced an excess,
A spirit of conquest, more proud and exalted,
Inspired a new order—The Knights of the Press.

Those round table tales are delectable reading,
And bright is the story of old Charlemagne,
But the heart of the present is aching and bleeding
For knight-hood more true than trod England or Spain.
Let wrong, like Atlantis, go down, slowly sinking,
Before the bold knight-hood we proudly profess;
Our slogan is progress, our lance is keen thinking—
The whole world salutes us—The Knights of the Press.

Oh, long has the night been and starless its borders,
But morning lures hope to survey its glad shore,
While steadily marches that flower of all orders,
Whose triumph will come when the wrong is no more.
Corruption, dismayed, may well fly from the struggle,
Oppression is sharing its victim's distress,
The sophist must cease soon to hoodwink and juggle
'Tis history's bow to The Knights of the Press.

The Knights of the Press, tho' they wield not the saber,
Are loyal to progress and first in its van;
The pen is their weapon, their pastime is labor,
Their cause is the welfare of nation and man.
Then hail to the Minister! hail to the speaker!
Hail to all who perceive the world's wrongs to redress,
The stronger's our brother and so is the weaker—
Their rights are the care of Knights of the Press.

EUGENE FIELD.

Prince of the measure and king of the quip,
Early dawn's oracle, seer of the day,
Love in his bosom, and song on his lip,
Realms of new childhood have lured him away.
Gently he passed, like a star of the morning,
Blent with the light, his new pathway adorning,
Out beyond trials and tortures of clay.

Wide was his fancy and sweet was his song,
Mirth without malice bespangled his jest;
Right's firm apostle and foeman of wrong,
Honor and truth led his labor and quest.
Fame is a flower that blooms oft in the gloaming,
Immortelles crowned him, triumphantly homing,
Bard of the nation and son of the West.

Strong was that heart, so untimely to fail,
Warm was the hand-clasp grown suddenly cold;
Hope, still aloft, was adjusting the sail,
Death like a thief in the night reached the hold.
Friendship is twining for him a rare garland,
Faith is petitioning that in some far land,
Child with the children, Field may not grow old.

Children shall mourn him at home and at school,
Parents shall miss a delight which they knew;
Critics shall smile upon "Phelim O'Toole,"
Nations shall sorrow for "Little Boy Blue;"
Hearts shall avow though the fountain be shattered,
Gems that it fostered and rainbows it scattered,
Still shall abide with the sunshine and dew.

★ ★ ★

BLAINE.

Peace after conflict, after labor rest;
No friend can vex, no enemy molest;
He sleeps securely with the truly great,
And deathless honor is his proud estate.
The claims of self sunk in his country's need.
He stood an oracle and guide indeed;
High was his mission, noble was his aim,
He lived for duty, and his meed was fame.

Self-poised and dauntless on distinction's height,
He faced the world, the champion of right,
And grasped the poisoned shaft that envy sent,
And pointed to the fruit of good intent.

His service never tempered by reward,
Ambition was his servant, not his lord;
His lode-star principle, its conscious ray
Forsook him not in trial's darkest way;
Servility could never bend his knee,
He scorned alike the schemer's hand and fee.
Proud was he—with that pride that stoops to weigh
Those atoms in each lump of human clay;
Ignoring spurious claims of wealth and birth,
He knew his fellows for their force and worth.
Ah, it is truly fearful to succeed!
Thro' mazy perils paths of triumph lead;
Achievement swallows puny failures down—
A victor's smile will make a thousand frown.

Each cloud, whose shadow o'er the land has strayed
Has blotted out some less pretentious shade;
Each stream that knows a channel to the sea,
Must doom to dusty drouth some sunny lea;
Each hero of a grand and high career,
Has shattered prospects in a humbler sphere.
God help the jealous! hell, perchance, is weak
A keener torture on their souls to wreak!
Antagonism is force's certain fruit—
'Tis so with man, so with the lower brute.
Blaine had his enemies, and such were they
As were not worthy of their place and day;
Outshone, outranked, theirs was the traitor's plan,
To damn the nation if it hurt the man!
They need no mark like Cain's upon the brow—
The nation knows them—would not heed them now;
When in oblivion they long have lain,
Enthusiasm will greet the name of Blaine.
Affliction's hand is heavy on the great—
The griefs of home, blend with the cares of state;
No height has honor, haven has success,
Where may not come the angel of distress.
Blaine knew this angel—to his desk it came,
And would return, to breathe a cherished name,

And as his busy pen aside was thrust,
He heard the message told of dust to dust.
Great mind, so well to plan, and do and dare!
Brave heart, so long to battle, bleed and bear!
Farewell, great diplomat, above thy bier
Might Fame have said: "Seek not his living peer—
Firm without rashness, without weakness mild—
In him behold my rarely favored child!"

Grand orator, farewell! each thought a ray
Bright with the promise of the coming day—
Thy eloquence was potent to decree,
Thy place the latest of the matchless three.
Vain is all tribute framed by tongue or pen—
The universe is mindful of such men;
America is mourning now with Maine—
The whole world with America—for Blaine.



LINES TO THE REV. C. W. CAMPBELL.

Dear Parson: From the vesper shore of Nox,
I greet you boldly with a paradox:
Our foes are sometimes friends—our friends are foes,
Most bitter when they will not stick to prose;
Foes turn our friends when then forbear to write—
Friends, scribbling, serve malevolence and spite;
Half one, half t'other, parson, take me for—
To-night I'd write you, if it caused a war!
I have a rage for scribbling—whence it came
I know not, neither know who was to blame;
I have it often, often it has me,
But 'tis a bad complaint you must agree.
Well, when I feel my rhyme is coming on,
Near me no doctor—all the catnip gone,
The sole preventives of which I can think,
Are Spencer's little pens and Carter's ink.
When I have written till I leel relief,
I send the lines to bring a neighbor grief;
'Twould break the charm to burn them, I am sure,
By proving lack of faith in my own cure.
I used to think of "writing for the press,"
And sowing broadcast, torture and distress;

Yes, gloried in the thought, that my poor muse
 Might give a hundred reading wights "the blues;"
 But failed in all attempts, perhaps because
 Our printers will respect their country's laws.
 Old Moses wrote it down, "Thou shalt not kill."
 A wise injunction that is binding still;
 And when my pen, bloodthirsty as the sword,
 A splendid funeral would fain afford,
 The printer most humanely prints my lines
 In such a way as foils my dark designs.
 The piece I wrote I've never seen in print,
 Tho' anxious searching has induced a squint;
 The murder and the heart-break I infuse
 Are drawn off always with waste basket ooze.
 The printer's caution wholesale slaughter checks,
 But, one by one, my friends go down as wrecks;
 When one epistle fails, I send 'em two—
 How many, parson, will it take for you?
 I have a figure—all my own, but trite—
 I use it half as often as I write;
 Just take an ostrich with long neck, short tail,
 Digestion speedy for a stone or nail,
 Legs rather slender, voice unfit to sing
 With bull-frogs even, when they welcome spring—
 Take him I say in every homely part,
 And plant an eagle's spirit in his heart;
 Let him aspire at will, to prey and soar,
 And scream at plodding man while passing o'er;
 What would you call him? goblin, fowl or elf?
 Alas! such bird were very like myself!
 'Tis said Poe longed to burst the cosmic bars,
 And grasp the forces that compel the stars;
 To launch his barque upon ethereal streams,
 And bathe his world-worn soul in seraph's dreams.
 Such aspiration is but madness: Life,
 Without it, has too much of pain and strife;
 It is a hell of hunger naught allays—
 Some heir it and it mars their dearest days.
 Unworthy mention in the selfsame line,
 With him whose lyrics must undying shine,
 Still this fell bias I can claim with Poe—
 My doubt is bitter where I long to know.

When but a child my thirst for lore was great,
And ignorance I deemed the darkest fate;
I stood, a Tantalus, begirt, indeed,
By truth that only mocked my anxious need.

Our destiny is older oft than we—
At least it has an ante-natal key;
The same unlocks in later years the room
Wherein we meet the Banquo's ghost of doom!
I have not time or space to dwell on this,
Besides must shun the fatalist's abyss;
But say in passing that environment
No little color to my life has lent.
I grovel, parson, when I long to soar,
I sigh for sunlight on a rayless shore;
Unstable as the iris, from me flies
My proud ideal, touched with fancy's dyes;
In mute despair I set me down and think
"Pierian Springs" are for the few to drink;
"A little learning," yes, I see with Pope,
"Is dangerous"—at least to fervent hope.
Well, parson, let me tell you how I stand—
Another Cortez on a neck of land;
Behind me stretching out the Past—a sea,
Whose moaning waves sob many griefs to me.
Before me, far and wide the future lies—
I hear its surf beat, when the tempests rise—
I hear its surf beat catch a glimpse of sails—
But shadows thicken and the vision fails.
It seems to me the isthmus grows less wide,
And Unbelief is not a trusty guide;
I long for comfort, confidence and peace;
And vainly stretch my arms to grasp release.
In God's own time, it may be—and I hope—
The mists will rise in which to-night I grope,
When I shall walk with Faith and see afar
The fadeless Isle where the eternal are.

Thanks, parson, for your interest and prayers—
My spirit for a time forgets its cares,
And quite disowns its chronic doubting mood
While deeply knowing candid gratitude!

WHAT IS THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN?

What is the white man's burden
Thro' all the storied years?
A heritage of sorrow,
A deluge born of tears;
A struggle in the forest,
A conflict for the right;
Black clouds upon the heavens
To emphasize the light.

What is the white man's burden?
Oh, ye of little faith!
'Tis not oppression's saber
Nor fallen Honor's wraith;
It is not Glory's cliquant,
Nor maniac Power's boast,
Nor yet the war-dog's triumph
Above a mangled host!

Go to your books, ye doubters!
Distinguish day from night,
And hurl not pagan blackness
At nations that are white.
Learn ye from truest annals
That destinies of men
Throb in the mighty problems
Within the white man's ken.

What is the white man's burden?
By Washington 'twas borne,
And Bolivar and Cromwell
With it made Pecksniffs mourn.
The white man's burden nerves us
In battling with the wrong,
And in bold pioneering
To lead the world along.

What is the white man's burden?
It is expansion's task;
To suffer while we offer
What sullen hearts ne'er ask;
It is to count achievements
By comforts sacrificed,
And follow on and ever
The foot-steps of the Christ!

LINES TO A FRIEND.

My Gentle Friend: Your latest letter
Reached me at length by way of Dwight:
Tho' fancy feels a sordid fetter,
And shrinks reluctant from a flight,
Yet this reply in lieu of better,
I thus proceed to frame to-night.
Ev'n tho' my muse be paralytic,
In you I hope a lenient critic.

Alas! mercurial spirits borrow
From their environment too much;
The gloomy eve—the sunny morrow—
Go by with all too deep a touch;
The shine is joy, the shade is sorrow,
And vainly reason carps at such.
I pass this as a weak digression—
Or just a hint at my depression.

Too much of self is in my writing—
A fault to habit largely due;
My life has never been exciting,
And I'm no paragon to view;
But somehow candor seems inviting
Confession frank to friends like you.
This fault of mine must have attention,
Since self you scarcely deign to mention.

You long for higher education,
As finer minds are prone to do,
To reach that wildering elevation,
Where rocks and stars proclaim the true—
To solve the problem of creation,
And comprehend the old and new.

Ah, is there not diviner knowledge
Than emanates from school and college?

If doubt be all the fruit of learning,
If faith must yield to tawdry lore;
If science keeps its beacon burning,
To guide to some agnostic shore—
Might we not well repress our yearning,
And never thirst for knowledge more?
Which is it, sciolism or science,
That sets devotion at defiance?

Not aphorism or proposition,
Not orrery or telescope—
Not aught of genuine erudition,
In all its comprehensive scope,
Should startle faith with dark suspicion,
Or silence orisons of hope.
Alas, by learning grown conceited
The aim of science is defeated.

'Tis not alone the ignoramus
May cling to treasures of the heart;
In science there is naught to shame us,
No degradation leagues with art—
For our perversions angels blame us,
Once from the real we depart.
Who comes from school a transcendental,
Has known a moral loss and mental.

To greet all strangers in their diction,
To speak its tongue in every clime,
To pore o'er history and fiction,
And catch the spirit of all time,
Would be a triumph past depiction,
And should not tend to moral crime.
Prigs spell in logic an acrostic,
Which rightly means fool, or agnostic.

Kinship with nature—disposition
At peace with God, in touch with man—
A right conception of our mission,
With ardor in progression's van—
For knowledge some such definition,
Had I more leisure, I might plan.
True knowledge is the pledge of duty,
The fount of worth and test of beauty.

Let unbelievers weakly ponder,
Confusing reason, losing trust;
Triumphant faith and wisdom wander,
Above the doubts of stolid dust,
And mark amid those bright worlds yonder
The glittering pathway of the just.
I count that lore both vain and meager,
Which makes the spirit's hope less eager.

I feel the lack of erudition—

Ah, not the specious, but the true—
My books, to make a plain admission,
Are shallow, half unused, and few—
But worse, I know not that contrition,
Which scoffing Saul of Tarsus knew.
Could I with others share the learning,
That caused the prodigal's returning!

You sigh for higher education,
Just as some star might pine for light,
Which by its glorious radiation,
Pales dimmer beauties of the night;
Methinks your Christian exaltation
From lore could gain no greater height.
Oh, better than the show of splendor
Is hope to give and aid to render!

★ ★ ★

THE CHAMPION FOOL.

I met with an old man, wrinkled and gray,
Who had seen of the world much in his day;
His step was slow, but his head was firm,
And he called each thing by the proper term.
“Say, gray-beard friend,” I appealed to him,
“Your vision is clear where my own is dim:
Of all the fools, either far or near
The greatest one flourishes in what sphere?”

He beat with his cane a muffled tattoo,
And he shut one eye to condense his view,
Then over his features crept a leer,
As he answered me thus, with a conscious sneer:
“Of all the fools, fellow, high or low
You are one of the biggest—not to know!
The fool that ever must take the cake,
Long as nights may fall or as dawns may break,
Is not the Congressman who will sell
His vote and imagine that none will tell;
He is not the preacher who will deem
That all of his hearers praise his theme;
He is not the bachelor who is tied
At last to a vixen as his bride;
Nor is he the pedagogue calm and cool
Who hopes all the world will praise his school.

In none of these, sonny, that fool is found—
He runs a paper the year around,
And fancies that all of his readers will pay,
And half of them good of his sheet will say.
If the tomb of the biggest fool you would lave
Hunt up that aspiring editor's grave!

MY PICTURE IN THE PRESS.

I do not sigh for Gould's estate,
Or Edison's big name;
While one trots proudly with the great,
A million chaps fall lame;
A mild ambition serves for me,
One pruned of all excess:—
I should be satisfied to see
My picture in the press.

I sit and ponder many a while,
With many a hopeless sigh,
How I can get my rarest smile
Before the public eye.
The avenues to notice seem
All thronged with over-work—
Its old to cuss "Cap" Weyler's scheme
Or talk about the Turk.

I'd make a big machine with wings,
But then it wouldn't fly;
I lack the "cheek" to spring from Kings,
And for an heiress try.

My hair, alas, is raven black,
Untouched with streak of white—
I saw not Washington come back
From Yorktown's glorious fight.

I've guessed McKinley's Cabinet
A dozen times or more,
But not one sheet has pictured yet
The source of so much lore.

I use the pronoun "I" as much
As any man on earth;
But, hang it! I've been out of touch
With good luck since my birth.

Of course I might go West and prove
Bill Dalton still alive,
But what's the use to make the move
Where those detectives strive?
George Taylor I could act awhile
And get my picture shown,
But could an honest fellow smile
On features half his own?

Begone despair! success comes by;
Ambition's goal is sure.
My picture soon shall certify
To some astounding cure!
'Tis strange, yes passing strange, indeed,
That while folks lean and fat
Have smiled from columns others read
I never thought of that.

Well, I must post up on the ills
That mortal men endure,
And then take Dr. Skinnem's pills,
Or Gougem's magic cure.
'Before and after'—that's too much—
The "after" shot's enough—
But won't I try the artist's touch
With collar, tie and cuff?

I do not care for vulgar pelf
Or glory's fading tint,
Though I am fond enough of self
To want my name in print.
A mild ambition serves for me,
One pruned of all excess:—
I shall be satisfied to see
My picture in the press.

* * *

FALL TIME

Fall time in Missouri! aint it out of sight?
Hickory nuts a droppin' and fires a blazin' bright!
Taters in the ashes, apples on the shelf,
Pass around the cider till you hardly know yourself.

Fall time in Missouri! country full of life!
Everybody happy with his sweetheart or his wife!
Blue smoke from the houses, up and up it curls,
While we go a rollickin' and ridin' with the girls!

Fall time in Missouri! hardest time to beat!
Life throbbin' in yer pulses an' kickin' in yer feet;
Never nothin' like it; happy day and night;
Cider in the jimmyjohn an' fires a blazin' bright!

DUTY.

Here's a talisman when the impish clan
Of cares and troubles find us;
If pressed to the heart, they will soon depart,
And weakly scowl behind us.
'Tis a pledge of toil, and it has no foil
To emphasize its splendor,
But no gem, I ween, was ever yet seen,
With half its spell to render.

'Tis a bar or guide of our human pride,
Unwise are we to scorn it;
We spurn it still to make life ill,
We grasp it to adorn it;
It may lack the hues vain dreams infuse,
When skies are dull and ashen;
It may mar caprice, but it brings us peace,
And to virtue tempers passion.

'Tis a calm relief in the day of grief,
When a dear one has departed;
It turns, by its spell, to Hope's immortelle
The futile tear that started.
Oh, the raptured scenes, and the joy it means,
When true hearts are united!
Oh, its solace lent to the discontent
Of affection unrequited!

It is glory's seal when battalions reel
On the field of sullen battle,
And the dead and maimed thro' its charm are nam-
ed
In patriot children's prattle.
Did our statesmen hold in the scorn of gold,
This talisman unfailing—
Ah, the hopeless prayer of want and despair
Might rise less unavailing!

Life has no plane where it may not gain
From peace a benediction;
As 'tis meted here to each in his sphere,
So we mete his dereliction.
With solemn thought is its teachings fraught,
And well if we have conned it;
It yields no phrase for the breath of praise—
Its triumphs are beyond it.

Oh, the talisman that unfolds the plan
Of patient persevering,
And refines the soul for the viewless goal
It every day is nearing!
It is Heaven's own charm to scatter the harm
That gathers round and o'er us,
And Duty must still own the tenderest trill
In all the angelic chorus!

★ ★ ★

FACE YOUR TROUBLE.

Allus always keep your eye on trouble,
Look it squarely in the face;
Dodgin', blinkin', seein' double
Aggravates the mildest case.
Care's a sort of moonlight giant,—
To the timid, fierce and tall;
Meet it open-eyed, defiant,
It will fade or dwindle small.

Day's too open to be nervous,
Night's too short, for seein' ghosts,
Life's at best a field of service,
And there's safety at our posts.
Don't set down and groan and whittle,
Shapin' dragons with your knife—
Trouble's bands, I say, are brittle,
If we make the most of life.

Thistle-down blows past the gentian,
It don't think it is a sprite,
And it pays no fool attention,
Trustin' Nature day and night.
Size of troubles and their number,
Much depends on how one looks—
If we're lost in day-time slumber,
Why of course we see some spooks.

Lions conquer beasts that bother,
But from insect pests they fly,
And perhaps the Heavenly Father
Sees they're wise as you or I.
Urchin lookin' in the bubble,
Which would sink beneath his breath—
Let us not so look at trouble
Till it worries us to death.

THE RIVER OF REST.

There's a stream which runs through a far off land,
With a cadence soft and low,
O'er glittering sands, as if spirit hands,
Were gilding its quiet flow;
And many a sigh, as the waves glide by,
Is borne on its limpid breast;
For this placid stream with sparkling gleam
Is Lethe, the river of rest.

There are lovely flowers along that stream
Which never are out of bloom;
There are lilies fair and roses rare,
And violets' sweet perfume;
And purple heart's-ease, Hesperian trees,
With golden fruit hung low
In nests of green; their glimmering sheen
Plays on the river below.

I wonder if our loved and lost
All reach that fragrant shore—
Lave 'neath the gleam of Lethe's stream,
And learn to weep no more?
For if ever I stand upon that land
Not all of Lethe's tide
Could ease the pain of my heart's refrain
If one were left outside.

Oh wondrous river, Oh, beautiful land!
Some say thou art but a dream
Of a poet's mind who thought to find
For his pen a happy theme;
In a vale of flowers and glad some hours,
By balmy winds caressed—
The changing gleam of a rippling stream
A promise of endless rest.

It may be my dim sense has failed
Fully to understand
The mystery of eternity—
That brighter, better land;
But this I know; for us below
There is a life to come,
Where I shall see as others see
The joy of Elysium.

WHY BILLY LEFT THE FARM.

Our Billy was a rustlin' chap,
Unlike us other boys,
An' when he could make nothin' else,
Why he would make a noise.
He had a bushy, busy head,
A plump and sunburnt arm,
And tho' he was not lazy, still
Our Billy left the farm.

Our father was as true a man
As ever killed a sprout,
But ne'er forgot how Absalom
Would cut old David out.
"Let old men if they want to hang,
Just give their sons the rope"—
He'd say this twice a week, an' add
"I ain't a fool I hope."

Well Billy was the oldest boy,
An' he was nearly grown,
When, David-like he thought to build
Himself a better throne.
He said one mornin' "Dad see here,
I do not ask my part,
But, hang it! dad, I'm old enough
To have a little start."

Our father said, "Next winter, Bill,
If hay and fodder's cheap,
I'll try to shape affairs, so you
Can claim a calf or sheep."
The winter was extremely cold
An' there was one poor calf
That looked so thin, it didn't seem
Worth half its weight in chaff.

One snowy evenin' father tied
The relic in a stall,
An' said, "Bill, if you bring it out,
You get the hide an' all."
Well, Billy went to work at once
To pull the carcass through,
An' when washed by the April rains,
The calf looked splinter new.

One June-day father passed it by,
When goin' out to plow,
An' said, "Bill, what was once your calf
Has got to be my cow."
Then Billy smiled a sickly smile,
Yet didn't sulk or pout,
But wore the look the prodigal
Had on when goin' out.

That night our Billy went away,
With only clothes and health,
An' told us boys he would come back
Some day with lots of wealth.
We heard from him—a deck-hand on
A steamboat some one said;
Our father often went to town,
An' mother went to bed.

We worked right on—our acres spread,
As bounteous years went by,
We got accustomed to the change,
An' mother's eyes got dry.
He wrote but once: "I'm gettin' on,
I need not tell you how;
Tell father that I wish him luck
An' pleasure with his cow!"

He came to visit us at length,
Dressed up in city style,
An' lookin' sharper than a saw
That's lately felt the file.
He said to father when he left,
"If I had kept the cow,
I'd not have been a rail-road man,
With half a million now!"

Well, father learnt the lesson well
And with the others shared;
But, Billy as it seemed to me,
The best of all had snared;
But Fortune is a tricky jade
An' packs a secret charm,
An' this, I take it is the cause
Why Billy left the farm.

SHADOWS.

I long for the blessing of rest,
Rest that is lasting as deep;
Flown, flown are my purpose and zest,
I pant for the Isle of the Blest,
Whose haven is visionless sleep;
False friends have long crossed and caressed,
False hearts have disturbed and distressed,
Tares only my fate is to reap;
I long for the blessings of rest,
A rest that is lasting as deep.

The grave has no horror to dread,
Our kin are the worm and the clod;
Tho' care driven millions should tread
Unheeding across the low bed,
No heart aches can enter the sod;
There is healing for breasts that have bled,
And dewdrops the heavens may shed
Letter out a true pardon from God!
The grave has no horror to dread,
Our kin are the worm and the clod.

Then oh, for the peace of the tomb,
Its freedom from guilt and from care!
Life's only a splendor-girt gloom,
Its highways all center at doom,
Far down in the vale of despair!
Love,—love is the heart's early bloom,
That poisons with subtle perfume
And leaves all its skeletons bare—
Then oh, for the peace of the tomb,
Its freedom from guilt and from care!

★ ★ ★

WE STAND TOGETHER NOW.

All section's vipers cease to blow,
And party whips lie still;
Confronted by a foreign foe,
We arm us with good will;
From old Niagara's hoary crag,
And Hudson's rocky brow,
To prairies of the Lone Star Flag,
We stand together now!

By Washington's unsullied fame,
By Jackson's proud degree,
By Grant's imperishable name,
And that of Robert Lee,
By all the blue and all the gray
In unison we vow,
If war must darken o'er our day
We stand together now!

Green Mountain boys will spring to greet
The lads of Tennessee,
While on the land or with the fleet
As brethren all agree.
For freedom we have struck before,
We need not question how;
For triumph on the wave or shore,
We stand together now!

With Woodford bidding at Madrid
And at Havana, Lee,
Assassin aims may not be hid
That menace Liberty.

By all the brave men of the Maine
That died from stern to prow,
We pass this warning o'er to Spain--
We stand together now.

* * *

THE FARMER.

Oh, the farmer of the future!
Fancy sees him proudly stand,
With much science in his cranium
And cunning in his hand;
Sees him snare the distant rain-cloud
As the sportsman snares the pike;
Sees him raise a kind or turnip
All the world will have to like;
Sees him profit by rotation
In the planting of his crops;
Sees him closely scan the market
All the way from wheat to hops;
Sees him greet the artful demagogue
That's seeking place and pelf,
With the words, "I plow the land, sir,
And I'll run it some myself"

OPTIMISM.

Quit lookin' at the dark side, Bill,
For night there's allus day,
Tho' mornin' mists hang on the hill,
The sun comes up to stay.
Don't hunt around for heath and rue
And tramp your lilies dead—
W'y if the sky was allus blue,
We'd long to have it red!

Quit listenin' for discords, Bill,
The world ain't out of tune;
We need a bit of wintry chill
To spice the hours of June.
A long, dead heat of picnic days
Would only make us mourn;
Life's dished out in a thousand ways,
So that it can be borne.

The world is full of promise, Bill,
And just as full of love;
Some fog may settle on the hill,
But all is bright above.
If some black eye has brought you care,
Why there's a blue to try—
This life is so O. K. I swear,
There's libel in a sigh.

Our paths are lined with roses, Bill,
We needn't hunt the thorn;
Its just as nigh to Heaven still
As 'twas when we was born!
If sorrow's weight is on your heart,
It tries you for the strife;
I tell you now, till I depart
I'm strictly in this life!

★ ★ ★

LINES TO THE REV. W. B. STEVENS.

Dear Parson:—If you will excuse
The rudeness of my artless muse,
I beg you also will peruse
The lines I send you,
And should I so transmit "the blues,"
May grace defend you!

Although as friends we have not met
(A circumstance which I regret,)
My heart has room for comers yet,
 With rates quite normal,
So thus I tell you 'tis "to let,"
 In style informal.

Upon devotion's sea appear
Dense mists that make my way not clear,
While voices all around cry, "Here!
 Here is your vessel!"
But still with conscious doubt and fear
 I sorely wrestle.

Back to the past my reason flies,
Where Swedenborg and Luther rise,
Each in conviction's boldest guise
 And both time tested,
But where such yawning difference lies,
 Despair's suggested.

I hear John Knox and Leo shout
Their sullen contradictions out,
And stand between their fires to doubt
 Whose views are clearer,
While ills and cares grow thick about,
 And doom draws nearer.

Since boyhood, I have wandered far
From peace and its benignant star—
I scarcely know where duties are,
 And hope's a stranger,
But trial's haunted harbor bar
 Still warns of danger.

Soul freedom, 'tis the boon I crave!
Sink wealth and fame beneath the wave—
But give me grace to cleanse and save
 And I'm contented!
So long have I been Nature's slave
 I'm half demented!

Your prayers, good Parson, I invite—
I need—oh, how I need the light!
In your sincerity is might—
 Your actions show you:
I hope some future day or night
 To meet and know you.

A MEMORY.

Twas in autumn, long and long ago—
And I measure the time by sighs—
When the year had caught a hectic glow,
That beauteous, sad disguise.
The hills were touched with scarlet and gold,
And soft was the noontide's breath,
Yet an allegory each landscape told
Of an ineludible death.

The elm and the sugar-tree distant broke
On the sight in mimic flame;
And the ivy graced the ancient oak,
As fair and futile as fame.
The clouds were dun, and the birds were rare,
And low was the song of streams;
There were memories stirring in the air
On the dædal wings of dreams.

Ah, it was a glorious afternoon,
Such as thrills my heart no more,
And I deemed the wraith of dear, lost June
Returned from the By-gone's shore.
In the atmosphere seemed a mystic woof
Of the past and the days to be,
And the soul was burdened with a proof
Of its insufficiency.

Regrets sobbed a timorous complaint,
And tremulous hopes replied,
While my spirit rebelled against restraint
And hungered for joys untried.
Oh, the yearnings deep in the breast of youth
Are but the earnest of pain,
And in our grasp the lilies of truth
Must wear an unhallowed stain.

She was as care-free and young as I,
That afternoon when we met;
Ah, the witchery of her glance and sigh
Was a rapture and regret!
With others we joined in a woodland rove,
To the heart of childhood dear;
But a magic reigned in each glade and grove,
And I felt but one was near.

Her eye had a charm for an older breast
And a wiser one than mine,
And there played in its azure an unrest,
That was earthly yet divine.
An infection seized me as we went,
Which has marred my later years—
The malady of dark discontent,
And thought that endures and sears.

I have lived to sigh o'er shattered dreams,
I have lived to wish me dead;
I have lived to taste the wormwood streams
Of the tears that are never shed.
Ah, oftentimes must I weakly grieve
O'er many a sad caprice,
But my hour of fate flew by that eve
When I said farewell to peace.

* * *

“ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON.”

Yes, I know the times are ruther—
What you call 'em—close^d and tight,
And it keeps a feller thinkin'
How to spend an evenin' right.
But I tell you very plainly
You're a miser and a crank
If you've not seen Mrs. Gordon
Turnin' down the tip-top rank.

Say, I tell you, hunt a doctor,
For your heart is out of tune,
If you didn't half die laughin',
At her “Friday Afternoon.”
There is grace in all her motions,
There is nature in her art,
While her killin' eyes keep flashin'
Out the meanin' of each part.

When I heard her I was sittin'
Somewhere near the middle row,
And she came out lookin' slender,
Like a lily fixed to blow;
So I told myself I'd hardly
Ketch a single word she said,
But Jemima's sacred picture!
She could shout a Titan dead.

Well, her lithe voice and her features
 Went to playin' with the theme,
 While I quite forgot the present,
 And appeared to dream a dream—
 In which stood once more before me
 That old school house built of logs,
 Where I used to study spellin'—
 Sparkin' too, an' ketchin' frogs.
 Yes, she brought before me Billy,
 With the sorghum on his mouth,
 And his big one gallus breeches
 'Tilted to the North or South;
 And she said a piece like Sammy,
 Who could hardly spell his name,
 But could bend a pin so perfect
 That three deestricks knew his fame.
 An' she made me think of Mollie—
 Oh, the darlin' little thing!
 Who could kiss a feller quicker
 Than a bee can shove its sting.
 Like a bee, some sweet, some bitter,
 Was that early love of mine,
 And she kep' my thoughts a surgin'
 Worse 'an soaked in wine.
 All my very hearty laughter,
 Which her magic did evoke,
 Was enwrapped in pleasing sadness,
 Like the autumn hills in smoke.
 I am hungry and despairin'
 Of a fittin' thought or line,
 But if you will go and hear her
 You will think her half divine.



THE DOLLAR.

The dollar is a paradox,
 A most veracious lie;
 'Twill purchase all on earth, except
 That most we need to buy.
 To win it for declining age
 We drudge away our years,
 And seeking pleasure's talisman,
 We find a pledge of tears.

'Tis small to apotheosize
 'Tis vulgar to adore,
But since they sinned in Baal's day,
 We moderns venture more.
We pray unto the living God,
 And lift our bended knees,
To scheme how this fictitious one
 May bring us pomp and ease.
We brand the spend-thrift as a fool,
 The miser as a knave,
And yet compound their madness in
 A sweepstakes for the grave.
We clutch for happiness that which
 No happiness can give;
We slave for respite from our toil,
 And suicide to live!
Oh, Mammon! falsest of all gods
 That ever wrought a curse!
What peace is in a bank account?
 What virtue in a purse?
May sleek Prince Alberts and champagne
 Atone for active sin?
Do honest rags and cheeks pinched pale
 Prove evil lurks within?
We need a wider charity
 Upon a higher plan—
Give not the man to dollars, but
 Give dollars to the man.
There was a slavery of flesh,
 There still is of the soul.
And men and nations feel the curse
 As wide as pole to pole.
As dreaming thirst in deserts hears
 False fountains trickling round,
So avarice in riches seeks
 A triumph never found.
The dollar is a paradox,
 An irony of need,
A sermon on improvidence,
 A satire on our greed.

MY MONUMENT.

Their cenotaphs the great may claim,
Their mausoleums the vain parade,
And linger on in marbled fame,
When all they were to dust is laid;
The proud in voiceless bronze may stand,
And loose their magic on the years;
But Chronos waves a ruthless wand,
And sighs will cease soon after tears.

I want no false pretentious show
To flout the verdure of my mold;
I want no tale of him below,
In shameless marble deftly told.
Let not the cypress or the yew
Blend shadows with the churchyard gloom,
To shed their heavy, tearful dew
O'er midnight musers by my tomb.

Let me lie in some quiet yard,
Where humble mortals sweetly sleep—
Where never throngs display regard,
But breaking hearts for solace weep;
Some modest yard, secluded, where
The grass in coming Mays will grow,
And scents will bring upon the air
Soft reveries of long ago.

There let the springs and summers weave
The only monument I ask—
The grass will grow not to decieve,
The wild rose bloom not as a task.
Oh, plant no votive evergreen
Above my cold, unknowing dust;
Such fragile things are weak, I ween,
To symbolize eternal trust.

I would I knew the daisy fair,
Anon might grace my heap of earth
To hint to old friends passing there,
Remembrance full, of doubtful worth;
Then might they deem of what had been,
With soft forbearance in each heart;
And turn, forgetful of all sin,
To look on Nature's better part.

Let only loved and lulling streams
 Speak eulogies to foe or friend,
 Of one passed on from fevered dreams—
 On where the shadows lift or blend.
 Yes, let the springs and summers weave
 The only monument for me—
 The grass will grow not to deceive,
 The wild rose boast no false degree.



AN OCTOBER ROSE.

When Autumn's dreamy hush and haze
 Lay o'er the landscape like a spell,
 When sad reflections dimmed the gaze,
 And reverie sobbed with each bell—
 A timid rose bloomed by my door,
 As fair as woos the June-time hours;
 An exile from the summer's shore,
 A peri from the land of flowers.

The lingering beauty of decay
 Deft hands of pitying fates bestowed;
 Like sunset of a summer day,
 The solemn hills serenely glowed.
 The sumach red, burned like some sphere,
 Its orbit lost, its cycles spent,
 Beyond the ecliptic of the year,
 Consuming in its last descent.

The rose turned, trustful, to the sky,
 Amid the pageantry of doom;
 And echoes of a summer sigh
 Seemed pulsing in its faint perfume.
 Unfed by dew, by night winds chilled,
 It gazed upon the autumn sun
 With all the hope of mission filled,
 And all the pride of duty done.

When self, which is our sternest fate,
 From Eden drives us, lone and far,
 Till furies might forego their hate,
 And fiends might pity all we are—
 There sometimes comes, as comes that rose,
 A long lost spirit of our youth
 To weep a time upon our woes,
 And turn away in hopeless ruth!

A FEATHERED HOPE.

I heard a blue-bird's roundelay,
While Winter's fetters bound the stream;
Thrilled with remembered joys of May,
It sat upon a barren spray
And sang its glad, prophetic dream.

I heard a blue-bird's roundelay,
While Winter's fetters bound the stream.

At once the eager daisies came,
In starry vision to my mind.
Tho' zephyrs murmured Winter's name,
And landscapes grimly lay the same,
My fancy left the scene behind.

At once the eager daisies came,
In starry vision to my mind.

I caught the plum-tree's soft perfume,
I saw the hawthorn milky white;
Beyond the dull solstitial gloom
Before me, danced a field of bloom
To breezes throbbing with delight.

I caught the plum-tree's soft perfume,
I saw the hawthorn milky white.

I heard the rhythmic runnel flow,
While tearful April smiled above;
I felt within my heart a glow—
A votive thrill of long ago,
And knew it was remembered love.

I heard the rhythmic runnel flow,
While tearful April smiled above.

Dead aspirations in me woke,
Responsive to that modest strain;
An olden radiance o'er me broke,
Once more my better angel spoke—
God grant it did not speak in vain!
Dead aspirations in me woke,
Responsive to that modest strain.

The warbler ceased,—I turned away
And musing walked across the slope.
I thought, in life's tempestuous day,
When skies are black and fields are gray,
I might recall this feathered hope.
The warbler ceased, I turned away,
And musing walked across the slope.

THE RIVER OF LOST SOULS.

A legend tells of cavaliers
Who sought for El Dorado's shore,
Nor man's advice nor woman's tears
Could change a heart or stay an oar.
The canons breathed a wild despair,
The mountains frowned a ruthless doom;
They only deemed of treasures there,
And longed to see the lotus bloom.

The boat bore onward with the stream,
And aching hearts were left behind—
Ah, little does the youthful dream
Bear impress of the older mind!
Hope like chameleons may feed,
If heart is brave and spirit high;
Achievement knows a sterner need,
When courage only means to die.

The River of Lost Souls flows on,
True to its secrets and the sea;
The legend tells us they are gone—
The dead are further wise as we.
To hearts that bled with sorrow's wound
No cheering tidings ever came;
Their El Dorado is unfound
Their annal is the river's name.

Oh, sanguine is the breast of youth,
With dreams its troubles ne'er exhaust,
But time unfolds the scroll of truth
Whose legends weep above the lost.
Worn hearts! look backward o'er the years,
That widen gently in their slopes,
To that stream brackish with vain tears,
The dismal River of Lost Hopes!



THE GOOD TIME COMING.

The 'good time coming'—'tis a cheat,
A "South Sea Bubble;"
It is a fabulous retreat
From Destiny's harsh cold and heat—
A coward's plan of sure defeat,
And crushing trouble.

The 'good time coming'—preach it not!

The world is weary:
When hope is high and passion hot,
The future holds a magic spot;
But age is like the wife of Lot,
And dreams are dreary.

The 'good time coming'—ah, its skies
Are tempest laden.
Beneath the main, Atlantis lies,
Utopian suns will never rise—
It is not for our eager eyes
To look to Aidenn.

The 'good time coming'—man is frail,
And life is fleeting:
When heavy griefs and cares assail
Hope's pæan saddens to a wail,
While dirges down Time's solemn vale
Our hearts are beating.

The 'good time coming'—yesternight
Had all its promise;
The morrow's hopes with it are bright—
But ere the evening they will blight—
Once we approach a false delight,
It startles from us.

The 'good time coming',—men hope on,
Hope on and ever;
With yesterday some chance has gone,
Today some worthless blank is drawn,
But still they back the fabled dawn
Against the Never.

The 'good time coming'—Friends might hear
The phrase with laughter;
It robs our present of its cheer,
It pales the glory of our sphere,
It sadly dwarfs us in the here
And the Hereafter.

The 'good time coming'—Never wait;
Look to the present;
In the arena grapple Fate—
Great striving only makes us great;
With modest worth for our estate,
All times are pleasant.

INTRODUCTORY.

Miss Sutton,—May I write to you?—
Of course, for I *am* writing—
I mean—er— will you just glance thro'
The lines I am inditing?
“Should auld acquaintance be forgot?”
The Scotch song long has pleaded,
And I reply, “I reckon not,
Nor should *new* be unheeded.”

Your Aunt Samantha is my friend
And one esteemed sincerely,
So why these halting lines are penned
Perchance you may see clearly,—
Monotony these winter nights
Hangs round me like a curtain,
And correspondence has delights
If prompt replies are certain.

My heart is warm for Hoosier land,
Likewise for Hoosier people,
For in the hall of fame they stand
Not far below the steeple.
Lew Wallace I have pondered o'er,
Jim Riley I have quoted,
And tho' I dread to tell you more,
For Harrison I've voted.

Perhaps it is a little late
For “Happy New Year” wishes
But may you ne'er at dinner wait
Nor gaze on empty dishes!
Now, that's a sordid thought, I own,—
But, say, here in Missouri,
We're dwarfed to appetite and bone
By summer's withering fury.

I think you are a teacher. Well
It is a noble calling,
Not less so, that some martyrs tell
The chains are sometimes galling;
It is an altruistic field,
A sacrificial labor,
And they who well the birch rod wield
Eclipse the Knight with saber.

A plain Missourian I am,
My friends nor sheen nor saint me;
Like Cromwell, I detest all sham
When folks essay to paint me.
I have some failings—but I say,
To-night I'm not confessing—
If you should send a note my way,
I'd hail it as a blessing.

* * *

A. POEM.

That poem? Well it rains to-day,
With little chance for work or play,
And so I court the timid muse,
For lines—which you may no peruse.
If in them nothing you can find
To cheer the heart or aid the mind,
Consign them to the ruthless flame,
And only my weak talent blame;
My will is good to edify,
But small birds may not soar on high.
Like one who aimless roves at night,
Without one friendly astral light,
I peer before me, and around
In vain for fit poetic ground
On which to plant my metric feet
And offer you a worthy treat.
What's subject, tho' to bardic plan,
When all the world owes thought to man?
On "Nothing" once an essay famed
In England's affluent tongue was framed,
And likewise once a hardy wight
Seized pen to prove that "black is white:"
I'll promise this, and nothing more
This shall not prove an endless bore.

Do you like Autumn with her wealth
Of breezes cool promoting health;
Her harvests smiling from the fields,
Inviting tales of former yields;
Her gorgeous, regal, proud array
Of hues to gild an Eden's day,
With sumach's mimic torch ablaze,
Till flames seem burnishing the haze:

And saffron glow of monarch elms,
 Like sunset in celestial realms?
 But, hold! I never rhapsodize,
 Nor try to paint the rainbow skies.
 I love September with her charm
 Spread wide o'er every plain and farm;
 Her cornucopia that pours
 Till full are granaries and stores;
 Her fruits that blush a welcome back
 All fragrant as Pomona's track;
 But more I love October with
 Her tints that shame the land of myth,
 While every hill and every vale
 Is scenery for a fairy tale.
 Her gentian, with its eye of hope
 Upturned to heaven from glen and slope,
 Tho' nights are crisp and winds are chill,
 Preached to my youth and preaches still.
 I've often said and say it yet,
 If e'er I pay old Hymen's debt,
 The settlement will all be made
 In rare October's shine and shade.
 There's something in her mystic weather
 That well may bind two souls together,
 And if it only binds them fast,
 Till love and life itself be past,
 Enough—the bargain might be worse—
 They miss at least divorce's curse!
 Here must I halt, my thoughts grow weak—
 You'll deem me yet a sort of freak.

* *

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Your cousin? Ah, my heart is small—
 You've hinted we have none at all—
 And while its polestar rests with you
 It must disclaim the room for two.
 I do not doubt that she is fair,
 But double yokes I will not wear,
 Besides, the world is wide and she
 Might find no "shining mark" in me.
 At womankind I want to scoff,
 To think you want to "swap me off!"

And so at Terre Haute you'll train,
A higher vantage ground to gain.
That's French for "high land" is it not?
And so a most auspicious spot;
Well, here are wishes for your quest,
Tho' you forget a wight out West,
And while enthused with your success
Disdain with pen his days to bless.

I've vowed again—with heart, I think—
To battle back the demon, Drink;
Poe's 'tarn of Auber' late I saw,
And now I feel remorse so gnaw,
That conscience is so torn and sore,
I tell myself, "No more, no more!"
If I shall stand or if I fall
Your influence will not be small,
For sympathy for one in need
Must somehow claim on earth a meed.
I feel my pen begin to shirk,
I lay it by and go to work,
With hope that your inspiring pen
Will send some aid my way again.

★ ★ ★

IN MEMORIAM.

TRIBUTE TO ANNA WILSON SIMMONS.

Friend of my early years, confidante, guide!
Strong without vanity, great without pride!
Good words thou hast spoken for mankind and me,
And fain would I write fitting praise now of thee.
But high were the task, all too high for my pen—
The sphere of the sainted lies not in my ken;
And all I may do is to write as I feel.
And lose my own sorrow in hope of thy weal.
Altruist, thorough as Elsmere's feigned wife,
Life for weak mortals the zest of thy life;
Poetess, pure as the Carys, whose lays
Are whispers--'heart whispers'--of prayer and of praise;
Christian, whose practice and precept had zone
Marked out by the light from Elohim's bright throne;
Woman, unsullied by womanly fault—
Speech can not praise thee, nor meter exalt!

Thy spirit was pure as the June morning dew,
 And blithe as the lark in ethereal blue;
 Thy heart was the home of the graces that give
 A higher existence to mortals that live;
 Thy faith was a rapture, a vision that showed
 The region of Beulah along thine own road;
 Thy hope, like a rainbow, was bright on the cloud,
 Thy soul by dejection or doubt was not bowed,
 Thy words were the truth all the world might believe,
 Thy friendship—who ever once knew it deceive?
 Introspection had taught thee the way of the meek,
 Intuition directed thine aid for the weak,
 And in the heart's sunshine full bright were thy years,
 One summer of love that ennobles and cheers.
 Truest of friendship and mildest reproof—
 Warp of affection with charity's woof—
 Insight of nature, with sympathy strong
 For aiding the erring to right back from wrong—
 Soul of the saint with the heart of the nurse—
 Sustaining the better and lifting the worse—
 Those were the attributes thou didst possess,
 Beyond common mortals, to comfort and bless.
 Like night in the North when the solstitial glow
 Is faintly reflected by iceberg and snow,
 A trace of thee lingers—a precept, a tone,
 A smile of rare kindness—to cheer me when lone,
 And still shalt thou live thro' the eons to be,
 A light for the upright, a strength ev'n to me,
 Tho' brokenly, mournfully, hearts murmur on,
 In time with the falling tears—"Gone—she is gone!"
 Beatified being! the steps thou hast trod
 Were faithful as Enoch's and always with God.
 We knew not thy measure of merit on earth,
 Up There is the field for thy growth in soul worth.
 We never may fathom inscrutable Will,
 But Purpose is shaping each circumstance still,
 And Heaven is richer by more than we know,
 While poorer are we who yet plod on below.
 Farewell!—'tis a mockery written for one
 Who fared as a saint till her life's work was done—
 But 'tis a relief for my sorrow's rapt spell—
 Friend, truest and gentlest, farewell! and farewell!

IN MEMORY OF EDWIN ROBERTS.

Friend, thou art gone—away—away,
Like sunshine of a former day; †
How far we know not—we but know
Thine earthly form lies cold and low.
For thee has fondest friendship sighed,
And breaking hearts have poured their tide;
Thy friends thou first didst cause to mourn,
When to the grave thy clay was borne—
Ah, when such mortals sink to sleep,
Methinks the angels well might weep!

I knew thee well, and knew thee long,
And marked thee from the common throng;
I saw thy words and deeds attest
The noble heart within thy breast,
No hate could in thy soul abide,
No place was there for empty pride;
No selfishness, no sordid aim
E'er cast a shadow on thy name;
Falsehood and slander sought in vain
Upon thy lips to leave their strain.
In thee beginning was and end
Of all that's in the phrase, *a friend*;
A truer one none e'er will know,
Unless the seraphs come below!
The moral virtues all were thine,
And o'er thy name like jewels shine;
Thy worth a pedestal now lies,
From which points hopeful to the skies
The cenotaph that honor builds,
And truth's eternal sunshine gilds!
I miss thee, Edwin! Twilight bells
Through all their chimes sob sad farewells,
And o'er the noon of fairest day
Hangs gloom that will not pass away.
But late I chanced to see at night
A star shoot glittering out of sight,
And as went out its parting flame,
A darkness o'er the heavens came;
So, Edwin, when thou didst depart,
A sadness settled on my heart.

There is no death—creation cries—
All things must change, but nothing dies!
The clods that fall about the tomb
Beat not the dirge of final doom—
No! tell me not that lump of clay
Is all, and must be all for aye!
Ah! love—sweet love—of life the spring,
Love hears “the rustling of a wing,”
And hope—fond hope—can half explore
Eternity’s far, star lit-shore.
Sleep, Edwin sleep! thy toils are past,
And rest and peace are thine at last.
Thou wilt meet all thy friends, I trust,
Again beyond pain, death and dust,
For something whispers from above
The blest assurance, *God is Love!*

★ ★ ★

WRITTEN IN MEMORY OF ANNIE E. CAMDEN.

Loved one to the living lost!
Borne on angel wings away,
O’er the river thou hast crossed
To the realms of endless day.
Thou hast reached the sunny side,
Far beyond the mystic tide.
When the pallid boatman’s oar
With its muffled sound drew near,
Of the distant golden shore
Hope soft whispered in thy ear.
Gladly, for that bright world’s bliss,
Didst thou leave the cares of this.
Stricken friends cease ye to weep!
While the tear-drops dim your eyes,
Virgil o’er you she doth keep
From the palace in the skies.
Now among the seraph fold,
She hath passed the gates of gold.
Mem’ry oft will breathe the name
Of the one you loved so well;
Gone ere spring-time flowers came—
Gone where blooms the immortelle.
She is safe at home on high:
Mourners! meet her by and by.

IN MEMORIAM.

MRS. NANCY BERRY.

My shrinking pen I take up by request
'Tis weak to praise the woman now at rest.
She needs no eulogy, no gilded lines,
Her record like the morning herald shines;
She walked with duty, labored on with Love,
And proved on earth the graces born above.
Six busy decades showered her honors down,
Her charities still broadening to renown,
And each succeeding sun that rose and set
Beheld her healing heartache and regret.
Her name a synonym for modest worth,
She sighed with sorrow and she shared with dearth;
Unconscious of each burden of its own,
Her heart responded to her neighbor's moan.
Five years of consecration had refined
To the celestial stamp her plastic mind;
She viewed the world as but the stepping stone
To that bright realm about Elohim's throne.
Apocalyptic vision to her came,
At times the soul outsoared the mortal frame,
She saw in dreams as John on Patmos saw,
With saintly rapture free from human awe.
A mystic warning had foretold the end,
Yet death she waited for as for a friend;
Her life's long struggle with vicarious woes
Had richly earned this glad, triumphant close.
She lived in Beulah, but she saw beyond,
Her speech was fervent and her hopes were fond;
As planets yield the softened solar light,
With faint shekinahs oft her face grew bright.
She rests securely, ne'er to sigh again,
But her example lives in hearts of men.
Her consort, burdened with eventful years,
Finds age and logic weak to baffle tears;
Those sons, howe'er beset by active care,
Now miss a benediction on the air.
Those sturdy hearts, by this great sorrow tried—
To them the world is doubly blank and wide;
For them two words have lost their touch with life,
Two sacred over others—Mother, Wife!

To them will murmur still the wind-waked tree,
But often of what never more may be;
To them each flower she loved will show its hue.
But tears will greet its kindred drops of dew.
May Faith untiring tell them all is well,
And point the regions of the immortelle!

★ ★ ★

FATHER.

September's equinoctial sun went down,
As fades a barque low on the tranquil deep;
The vagrant western clouds forbore to frown,
The gentle wind had sunk to vesper sleep.

Just when the latest ling'ring solar rays
Shone, like the loyal smile of love's farewell,
With this, serenely closed his strenuous days,
And rest was his as twilight shadows fell.

There was no agonizing struggle for
The vague, elusive witchery of breath;
With Life's stern duties never known at war,
He went no shrinking captive, on with Death.

The stars came out as if each would invite
To its far sphere the spirit freed from clay,
A dreamy wilderness of softened light
Prophetic of the morning shore of Day.

The yellow leaf was on the ancient elm,
Like ripened honors on the head of age—
But what to eyes, closed to this hoary realm,
Were tints of mutability's dull page?

The tones that strove, as sea-weed with the tide,
Against grief's tremor, faltered to a sigh—
But what to ears, that mortal sense denied
Were all the sounds e'er heard from earth or sky.

Strange, that he lived thro' rare solstitial zeal,
And convalesced despite the swart-star's ill:
Sad, that with Nature's self he could not feel
The benediction from the greening hill!

Like some huge forest sire, bowed low to earth,
By weight of leaves in many autumns shed,
He lay at peace, with fruits to prove his worth—
Good deeds, that long survive the honored dead.

His kindness was the heart's unwritten law,
His duties all the way with conscience went,
His charities were not designed to draw
The throng's attention or a rate per cent.
He did not thread the mazy way of creeds,
Nor vainly measure out the power of rites,
But his religion was of helpful deeds,
Its sure reward, good days and peaceful nights.
Death is but rest—or in the soil or sea,
Note elemental change, for ample proof—
An interval before a new degree,
A rainbow loom replacing warp and woof.
My eyes are dim—I can not hope to cite
To mortal vision now his sphere or star,
But my belief—I hold it as my right—
Is, that he is where the eternal are.



IN MEMORY OF MAMIE BRYAN TAYLOR.

Innocence, beauty and grace,
Promise of fruitage divine!
In what ethereal place
Art thou now destined to shine?
Radiant here was thy soul,
Radiant there is thy sphere,
Safe in supernal control,
Vexed not by anguish or tear.
Bright shine the stars in thy tomb,
Green be the verdure of May!
Nothing of shadow or gloom
Now reaches thy glorious day.
Joy of a home left in grief!
Pride of a circle left sad!
As thy journey among us was brief,
So thy Paradise morning was glad!
Rosebud transplanted from earth,
Transformed to a rare immortelle,
No mortal can fathom thy worth,
Where the angels have called thee to dwell.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

If tears I had, they did not fall
Above the sacred spot,
Where to the earth was given all
We loved of Joseph Knott—
Ah, no, not all! for who might say,
That saw his speaking eye,
There was not something in his clay
That with it could not die?
The parting o'er the dying bed—
Its meaning who can tell?
'Tis not in tears all vainly shed
To fathom that farewell.
I deem not where his soul may shine,
How near or far away,
But at his memory's hallowed shrine
This votive wreath I lay.
Weep, Themis! for your gifted son,
With cold and pallid brow;
Remember victories he won,
And do him honor now!
His scepter was exalted thought,
His sovereignty was will,
His eloquence, that deeply wrought,
Through forums echoes still!
His failings—cynic! pass them by,
And learn your own to know;
Perfection's home is in the sky,
She never comes below.
Ere saying why all do not tread
The lonesome path of right,
Say why some stars are dusky red,
While some are pale and white!
Alas, for talent thus cut down,
When hope was pointing high,
And when with garlands of renown,
Proud Justice waited nigh!
'Tis vain to question of our fate!
'Tis idle to surmise,
But sorrow comes with crushing weight,
When worth untimely dies.

But he has passed from doubt away,
From darkness unto light,
And folly it would be to say,
Good hearted Joe, good night!
Methinks upon some fairer shore,
Which immortelles adorn,
It will be ours to say once more,
Good-hearted Joe, good morn!

* * *

IN MEMORY OF HOWARD MC GOLDRICK.

Here fate grants but a transient stay
To spirits pure and gentle;
Methinks they are thus called away
To virtues transcendental;
Ah, dismal is the mighty gloom,
Where all was green and vernal,
But the blighted violet shall bloom
An asphodel supernal.

Young Howard, with so bright a name,
So dear to all who knew thee,
I wonder not the angels came
So early down to woo thee.
So mild of speech, so true of heart,
So free from every failing,
Still memory bids the tear-drops start
Though time has hushed all wailing.

He stood on this life's shore and sighed,
"Oh, do not leave me, mother!"
And then embarked upon the tide
That bore him to another.
Yet, radiant thought! each earthly link
Fate sunders, shall be mended,
Though systems fail and planets sink
And time itself be ended.

Each one that dies leaves some to weep,
For death is wed to sorrow,
And none, unmoved, can view the sleep
That knows no earthly morrow.
But over youth's departing bed
Our hearts are most benighted:
Alas! alas! the early dead—
What hope and promise blighted!

Short was thy time on earth to stay,
Kind, patient, gentle Howard!
For thee, thus early called away,
Affection's tears have showered.
Thy virtues yield a nobler praise
Than any pen's laudation;
They shine like pale, soft stellar rays
O'er grief's dark desolation.

What is this death we mortals dread?
Is not that dread an error?
The moment when the soul has fled
It loses all its terror.
Then tireless hope looks far beyond
This vale of mist and shadow,
And love beholds in visions, fond
The future El Dorado.

* * *

IN MEMORY OF MRS. AMERICA CAMDEN.

Once more affection's heart drops rain
Above the bed of death;
But, ah! those tears are all in vain,
And ne'er restore the breath.
Yet well may sorrow's tide be poured
From fondly loving eyes—
The dearest friend our years afford
Is gone when mother dies!

The brightest sun—when Mother dies—
Shines dim, as through a cloud,
And darkly on the spirit lies
The shadow of a shroud.
How oft the loving heart must sink,
How oft the eyes must fill,
When voices rise in mirth, to think
That Mother's voice is still!

But, children, cease to shed those tears,
Although your hearts are sore;
You drift upon the tide of years,
To be with her once more.
An angel whispers from the sky
The message low and fond:
"Know that the righteous, when they die,
Live in the Bright Beyond!"



The Poet's Last Message.

LIVING AND DEAD.

Hope for the living, fruition, the dead—
After the sexton's work, why all the roses?
One down the way of the cactus must tread,
Ever and ever the other reposes.


Smiles for the living, aye, smiles like the dew,
For the dead, sorrow, serene and uplifting;
These rest from trials, where old things are new,
Those on the mad current darkly are drifting.

Tears for the living, tears deep from the heart,
Memories holy for all the departed;
Death is a Gilead balm for each smart,
Life is a school for the hosts broken-hearted.

Nothing but good of the living be said—
Rome was barbarian, wrong in her praises;
Eulogy reaches not out to the dead,
Fair speech is help to those lost in care's mazes.

Peace for the living, peace like the May morn,
Flags waving welcome, unvexed by war's thunder.
Peace like the dead's, until nations unborn
O'er the great crime of their ancestors wonder.

Love for the living and love for the dead,
Brotherhood blending the past and the present;
Stars of the ages still shine overhead,
May they show erring feet ways that are pleasant!



Pebbles on the Beach.

★ ★ ★

A masher, old in years and sin,
Consulted Doctor Akes;
The dentist told him with a grin,
And touched his pride as with a pin—
“I mend no toothless rakes.”

★

Ole Turkey better pull de stamps
For robbin' missionary camps—
De cash must be perduced,
Or me an' Uncle Sam'll sneak
Ercross dar some night frew de week,
An yank 'im off de roost!

✦

Fie, Mollie, fie! her sportive lover cried,
Then kissed her twice ere she was mollified.

✦

Miss Slim has fallen—deep in love
So Madam Rumor tells;
Alas it has a gruesome sound—
The fellow's name was Wells!

★

At last has Mrs. Gadabout
Regard for others shown—
She's welcome at the funeral—
Because it is her own;

★

An old Roman informs us, the wise
Live happily ever well, then,
Whosoever his fortune decries
Is, clearly, not classed with wise men.

★

Old Glory! float on in your red, white and blue,
In the dawn of fraternity's day,
We love you the more and we name you anew
The flag of the Blue and the Gray.

That every dog must have his day,
We learn from proverb lore,
But if we knew what cur or hound,
Had brought this solar blister round,
He'd have one nevermore.

★

A knife and woman—Semper Idem—
We never know till we have tried 'em
And just as surely—Idem Semper—
We judge 'em both best by the temper.

★

When neighbors magnify your fault,
'Tis little that they hurt you;
They come far nearer an assault
Who minify your virtue.

★

Some still may get their Billet Doux,
But Kaiser Wilhelm won't.
Half Europe has a mind to send
That prig a "Billy don't!"

★

Old Doctor Prime kept school for girls
His fame outreached his state;
He also kept engagements so
He never once was late;
And when he died, his epitaph
Thus made his strong points plain;
"He trained a thousand misses, and
He never missed a train."

★

To whistle out at danger takes
A lot of nerve, that's clear;
But one man thus the record breaks—
The railway engineer.

★

A fellow who lived at Moline
Felt wretched, despondent, and mine;
So got drunk and fought
But a lesson was taught,
When policemen appeared on the scine.

“Queer things will happen in the world.”
Quoth Young DeDude to Quinn;
“Yes, very true,” the latter said,
“When did you happen in?”

★

While rent some dentists never pay,
They seem to me like fakirs
Because they live from day to day
On other people's achers.

★

Credit is an empty hoax,
Any way man views it;
Verdict of a billion folks—
Using it, we lose it.

★

Some states charge men with shocking crimes,
And others with complicity;
But in New York they charge the worst
With shocking electricity.

★

The letter H in English has
A most exalted scope,
For it commences heart and home,
As well as Heaven and hope;
But in Missouri, memory,
It further serves to jog
By an association, old,
With hominy and hog.

★

Ilk man wha lang for meikle gear
An' for it slaves the lee-lang year,
Wars a' his spring an' simmer;
For Fortune is a mislear'd jad,
A graveyard maukin wars her bad,
Ae blink will steal the limmer;
Bright dollars loop thro' a' his dreams
Like gowden whigmeleeries,
But tho' they rin like linn-vexed streams
He wants mair o' the dearies.
Tho' knackless an' plackless,
I mair desire my fate;
Than worries an' flurries
That burden his estate.

We are progressing as we should;
The proof is to be had—
No more we canonize the good,
But musketize the bad!

★

Old North Missouri earns regard,
From Clark across to Holt;
We measure poultry by the yard,
And thunder by the bolt.

★

Spain's honor we can not blockade
So Spaniards all agree—
I know why they are not afraid—
That honor's all at sea.

★

All nations claim their aims are laid
In line with moral law,
But Spanish aim at sea displayed
Is worst man ever saw.

★

Wearied William saw a bike
On a wicked spike impaled,
And he said to Morbid Mike,
"Faith, our tire has never failed."

★

Earth is crowded now, they say,
With the bikes and bloomers;
But we all still find a way
To make room for rumors.

★

"The web of life of mingled yarn is made."
Says one who plies the philosophic trade,
And if he means the little yarn and whopper
We meet at every turn, his view is proper.

★

Some preachers practice what they preach,
I know whereof I speak—
Why I have heard good Parson Beach
Rehearsing all the week.





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